PLAY METER magazine

Shopping malls: friend or foe?

Half Century Club: Al Rodstein

Rowe salutes the jukebox

Coinman: Gary Stern

IAAPA Show coverage

VOLUME 16, No. 1 FOR THE COIN-OP ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY JANUARY 1990

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EQUIPMENT POLL BALLOT

Please rate the games on a scale of one to ten, with ten representing superior earnings. A space has been allowed under each manufacturer's name for a write-in entry.

VIDEO

American Technos:

Block Out	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
WWF Super Stars	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

American Sammy:

Omega Fighter	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Task Force Harrier	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Atari:

Championship Sprint	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Cyberball	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Cyberball 2027	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Escape From Planet of Robot Monsters	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Final Lap	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Four Trax	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Hard Drivin'	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
RoadBlasters	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Skull & Crossbones	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
S.T.U.N. Runner	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Super Sprint	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Tetris	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Bally Midway:

Arch Rivals	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Tri-Sports	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Capcom:

Buster Bros.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Capcom Bowling	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strider	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
U.N. Squadron	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Willow	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Data East:

Bad Dudes	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Midnight Resistance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Robo Cop	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sly Spy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Volleyball	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fabtek:

Cabal	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Dynamite Duke	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toki	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Jaleco:

Astayanax	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Big Run	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Konami:

Bottom of the 9th	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Crime Fighters	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
TMNT (dedicated)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Leland:

All Am. Football	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Team Quarterback	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Super Off Road	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Quarterback	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Nintendo:

Play Choice-10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Super Mario 3	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
TMNT (kit)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Premier:

Exterminator	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Romstar:

Aqua Jack	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Cal. 50	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Castle of Dragon	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Champion Bowling	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Final Blow	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Sega:

AfterBurner	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
E.S.W.A.T.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Golden Axe	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Line of Fire	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
OutRun	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Shadow Dancer	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Shinobi	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Super Hang On	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Super Masters	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Super Monaco GP	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Turbo OutRun	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SNK:

Beast Busters	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Gang Wars	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Merchanized Attack	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sky Adventure	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Street Smart	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Super Champ. Baseball	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Strata:

Golden Tee Golf 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Taito:

Chase H.Q. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Crime City 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Double Dragon 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Nastar Warrior 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Night Striker 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Operation Thunderbolt 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Operation Wolf 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Plotting 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
S.C.I. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Superman 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
U.S. Classic 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Tecmo:

Ninja Gaiden 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Tecmo World Cup '90 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Williams:

NARC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PINBALL

Bally:

Elvira/Party Monsters 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Mousin' Around 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Data East:

Time Machine 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Playboy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Monday Night Football 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Robo Cop 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Gottlieb/Premier:

Big House 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Bone Busters 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Lights, Camera, Action! 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Williams:

Bad Cats 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Banzai Run 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Black Knight 2000 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Cyclone 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Earthshaker 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
High Speed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Jokerz! 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Pinbot 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Police Force 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Swords of Fury 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Taxi 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

CD JUKEBOXES:

NSM 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Rock-Ola 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Rowe 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Seeburg 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Wurlitzer 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

OTHER EQUIPMENT:

Mfg. _____
Game _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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NEWS BULLETIN

■ The following press release was issued by AMOA and the performing rights societies concerning jukebox license fees:

"Representatives of ASCAP, BMI, SESAC, and AMOA announced today (Dec. 19) that they have reached an agreement in principle on the terms and conditions of voluntary jukebox copyright licenses. A formal agreement is being prepared and is expected to be completed before the end of January. Applications for the voluntary licenses will be made available to jukebox owners as soon as possible after the final agreement is signed, probably sometime early in February. The license applications and payments will be due March 15. As a result of the agreement having been reached, under the provisions of the 1988 Berne Convention Implementation Act, the compulsory licenses previously issued by the U.S. Copyright Office will be replaced by voluntary licenses."

"As soon as the final agreement is accepted by the copyright societies and representatives of AMOA, complete details of the agreement will be announced."

■ Arachnid Inc. has joined the AMOA-NDA (National Dart Association), a non-profit trade association dedicated to the promotion of electronic darting. Arachnid is the originator of electronic scoring dart equipment and a major manufacturer in the industry, producing both the *English Mark Darts* and *Coors Silver Bullet* machines. The action was consummated on Dec. 19 in the office of Arachnid president Bill Ward.

Arachnid's membership unites AMOA-NDA founding sponsors Merit Industries and Valley Recreation Products. The three are now the manufacturing sponsors of the association.

"This unification of the three largest manufacturers of electronic scoring dart equipment will create the largest player membership association of electronic dart league players in the world," said Joseph Conway, AMOA-NDA executive director. "The emergence of electronic darting as the sport of the 1990s is upon us!"

■ On Dec. 15, Montana District Court Judge Bart Earickson signed a temporary restraining order that allows for statewide operation of cranes—at least until a hearing on the matter on Jan. 3. According to Rick Hutchins, one of seven named plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the state Department of Justice, the machines will be operable pending the hearing's final outcome.

Cranes were deemed illegal under a law passed in Montana on Oct. 1, 1989. They were not specifically banned; Montana Attorney General Mark Racicot declared them so when asked for a legal opinion from the county attorney in Missoula, Mont. The attorney for the plaintiffs and Racicot will argue as to whether the law implicitly intended to outlaw cranes, or whether it was simply an oversight by the legislature.

■ Topics ranging from the dollar coin to heightening industry awareness were discussed at the Dec. 4 meeting of the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) board of directors. It took place in Phoenix, Ariz.

According to Bob Fay, AAMA executive vice president, the board covered such topics as: possibly meeting with JAMMA's board of directors sometime around ACME '90 (March 9-11 in Chicago); publishing a video game sales index on or about Jan. 1; sponsoring a coin-op trade show in Mexico City on July 10-11; kicking-off an industry spokesman program to increase industry visibility via the media (Fay and AAMA president Gil Pollock will be the chief participants, speaking with the media in their travels throughout the United States and abroad); and contacting counselors at various college campuses, with the idea of setting up "career day"-type activities to foster interest in the industry among collegians.

The board was also updated on dollar coin legislation, AAMA's enforcement efforts against counterfeiting, ACME '90 activities, and the association's new achievement awards for its members. The latter will be awarded to AAMA members in 10 different categories; they will be presented as part of the ACME show on March 10.

■ Following up on last year's successful jukebox promotion, AMOA has once again dubbed February "Love Month" (Valentine's Day is in February for all of you unromantic souls; get it?). The "Play Your Heart Out" promotion will consist of three or four love specific songs to be highlighted on jukeboxes across the nation.

The names of the records will be splashed across posters and table tents at the various locations. Sterling Title Strip Co. in Pittsburgh is printing up the materials. AMOA-member operators and one-stops will receive a letter with more details in January. The song titles hadn't been decided on at press time; we'll have more in our February News section.

■ On Dec. 1, a Canadian arcade owner plead guilty to 12 separate charges of operating counterfeit video games and received a fine of $42,000 ($3,500 for each charge), according to Bill Kidwell, AAMA director of investigations. Kidwell had assisted the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) on the case back in April 1989. Constable Ed Farrarro of the RCMP in Hamilton, Ontario, obtained a search warrant for two arcades owned by Karsten Rumpf—Karrum Amusements Ltd. and 98519 Canada Limited. The search yielded a number of counterfeit games, Kidwell said.

"I'm pleased with the conviction and the large fine," Kidwell commented. "I commend the RCMP for their past and present efforts in stopping counterfeit game board activity in Canada. The AAMA has received excellent cooperation from them, and it's greatly appreciated."

■ Pittsburgh distributor Banner Specialty Co. has gone out of business, according to confirmed sources. No one from the company was available for official comment, as numerous phone calls to their office went unanswered. Best estimates are that Banner closed down in late November/early December.

■ Prizes!, the crane merchandising company in Huntington Beach, Calif., has moved to a new 20,000-square-foot facility that will house the headquarters and warehouse operations. The new address is 5452 McFadden Ave., Huntington Beach, CA 92649; all phone numbers are unchanged.

A company spokesman says Prizes! has now moved three times in just over two years; it's been necessary as the company has grown. The additional warehouse space is being used primarily to accommodate the extra inventories being carried since Prizes! began to direct-import their plush items from overseas.

In other company news, E.F. "Pat" Patterson recently joined Prizes! as its vice president and general manager. He has over 10 years in the toy industry, having most recently been the Asian operations manager for Coleco Industries, creator of the Cabbage Patch Doll.

■ The state of Texas has a new distributorship, Sports Indoors Coin-Operated Amusement and Recreational Equipment. Headed up by Kirk McKennon, it will serve west Texas, New

Mexico, and Chihuahua, Mexico. The address is P.O. Box 220678, El Paso, Texas 79913; the phone number is (915) 833-0444.

Sports Indoors is still talking to various suppliers about obtaining equipment lines. We'll keep you updated when more firm information is available.

■ The battle between Nintendo of American and Atari Games within the consumer game market shows no signs of relenting. To the contrary, things have been heating up lately. The most recent shots were fired on Dec. 7.

Rep. Dennis Eckart (D-Ohio), chairman of the Subcommittee on Antitrust, Deregulation and Privatization, submitted the findings of his subcommittee's investigation of the home video industry to the U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division. In a letter to Assistant Attorney General James Rill, Eckart expressed concern about a series of measures implemented by Nintendo that "did not seem to raise significant concerns when (it) first entered the U.S. market. But with its almost total and pervasive domination of the industry, concerns about the anti-competitive effect of such practices have become unavoidable."

Eckart's letter focused on five antitrust issues: the "lock-out" computer chip system; the licensing agreements with software producers; the computer chip shortage; the "bundling" of software and hardware; and potential anti-competitive conduct in the retail market.

Here, in part, is a statement from Dennis Wood, senior vice president at Atari Games: "Nintendo has promoted the myth that it, and it alone, is the champion of the home video game industry. The reality is that Nintendo's behavior in the United States is so atrocious that it requires the action of the Department of Justice to restore free competition to the market.

"We applaud Rep. Eckart's recognition that Nintendo's monopolistic business practices transcend the legal disputes between the two parties. We fully support his recommendation for a full-scale investigation into Nintendo's unlawful domination of the U.S. home video game market."

Howard Lincoln, Nintendo senior vice president, said Eckart turned over his findings without providing Nintendo an opportunity to be heard. He added that the decision was based on incomplete and misleading information provided by Atari Games and its subsidiary, Tengen Inc.

In a letter to Eckart, Lincoln said "fundamental fairness" required that Nintendo be given the opportunity "to fully present its position to you and other members of the subcommittee."

Lincoln continued, "Nintendo's business practices have been reviewed in depth and approved by our attorneys, and we are confident that they comply fully with U.S. laws. They were designed to, and have succeeded in, resurrecting a dead industry in the United States, to the benefit of numerous small and large businesses from coast to coast, as well as retailers around the nation." In conclusion, Lincoln stated that Eckart's action "seems particularly unfortunate and unnecessary, since the issues of concern are currently before the courts. We are concerned, because the subcommittee has not heard from some of the nation's largest software developers and retailers, who are prepared to speak on Nintendo's behalf. Obviously, such support...would have exposed the weaknesses of Atari/Tengen's charges and caused the subcommittee to view this matter in an entirely different light."

Nintendo has filed suit in U.S. District Court in San Francisco against Atari Games/Tengen, alleging theft of Nintendo copyrights and infringement of patents.

■ Tennessee's Duke Distributing has a new address (and a new state!). The company is now located at 602 S. Main St., Franklin, KY 42134. The phone number is (502) 586-1663; the FAX is (502) 586-1773.

■ Linda Svelling, a marketing assistant at The Leland Corp. for many years, has left the company; she is relocating with her family to Charleston, S.C. Her position has been filled by Denise Conaway, a former Leland employee in customer service who had taken a leave of absence to start a family.

Also, Suzanne Durrill has joined the company as John Rowe's administrative assistant.

■ The city council of Duarte, Calif., voted on Nov. 28 to ban the placement of cigarette vending machines in places accessible to minors. The ordinance, which passed 3-2, went into effect on Dec. 28; existing vending machines must be moved or removed by April 1.

"We are entering the area of legislating morality and over-stepping barriers," said Councilwoman Ginny Joyce, one of the two dissenting voters. "It would be admirable if we could stop children from smoking, but I think the vending machine is the least of this problem."

But other councilmen felt the ordinance would benefit unattended kids under 18, who would be deprived access to an addicting substance. Said Councilman John Hitt, "We don't have whiskey dispensing machines. The vending machines are not appropriate to allow minors' unsupervised access."

Jim Reed, president of the California Coin Machine Association (CCMA), says 1988 amendments to state Penal Code Section 308 precludes local governments from regulating the distribution and sale of tobacco products. In short, he says, the city of Duarte cannot supercede legislative intent; the action taken is beyond its domain. Reed has written city officials to point this out, with hope that the council will take action to repeal the ordinance.

■ Play Meter extends its deepest sympathies to the families of two Ohio industry pioneers. Joseph Westerhaus Sr. of Pioneer Service Inc. in Cincinnati died on Nov. 10, while August Van Brackel of A. Van Brackel & Sons in Defiance passed away on Dec. 13. Both men were 78 years old.

PLAY METER, January, 1990. Volume 16, No. 1. Copyright 1989 by Skybird Publishing Company. PLAY METER (ISSN 0162-1343) (UPS 358-350) is published once monthly on the 1st of the month. Publishing office: 6600 Fleur De Lis, New Orleans, LA 70124. MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 24970, New Orleans, LA 70184, U.S.A.; phone: 504/488-7003; FAX 504/488-7083. For Subscriptions: 504/488-7003. Subscription rates: U.S. and Canada—$50. Advertising rates are available on request. NO PART OF THE MAGAZINE MAY BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT EXPRESS PERMISSION. The editors are not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. PLAY METER buys ALL RIGHTS, unless otherwise specified, to accepted manuscripts, cartoons, art work, and photographs. Second-class postage paid at New Orleans, LA 70113 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER Send Form 3579 to Play Meter, P.O. Box 24970, New Orleans, LA 70184.

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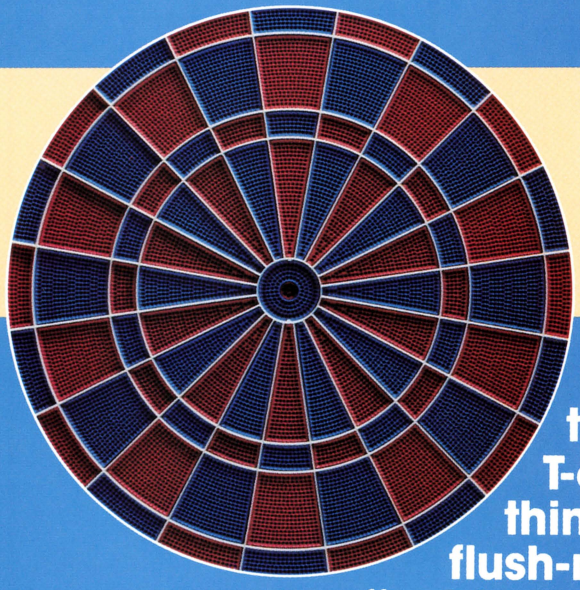

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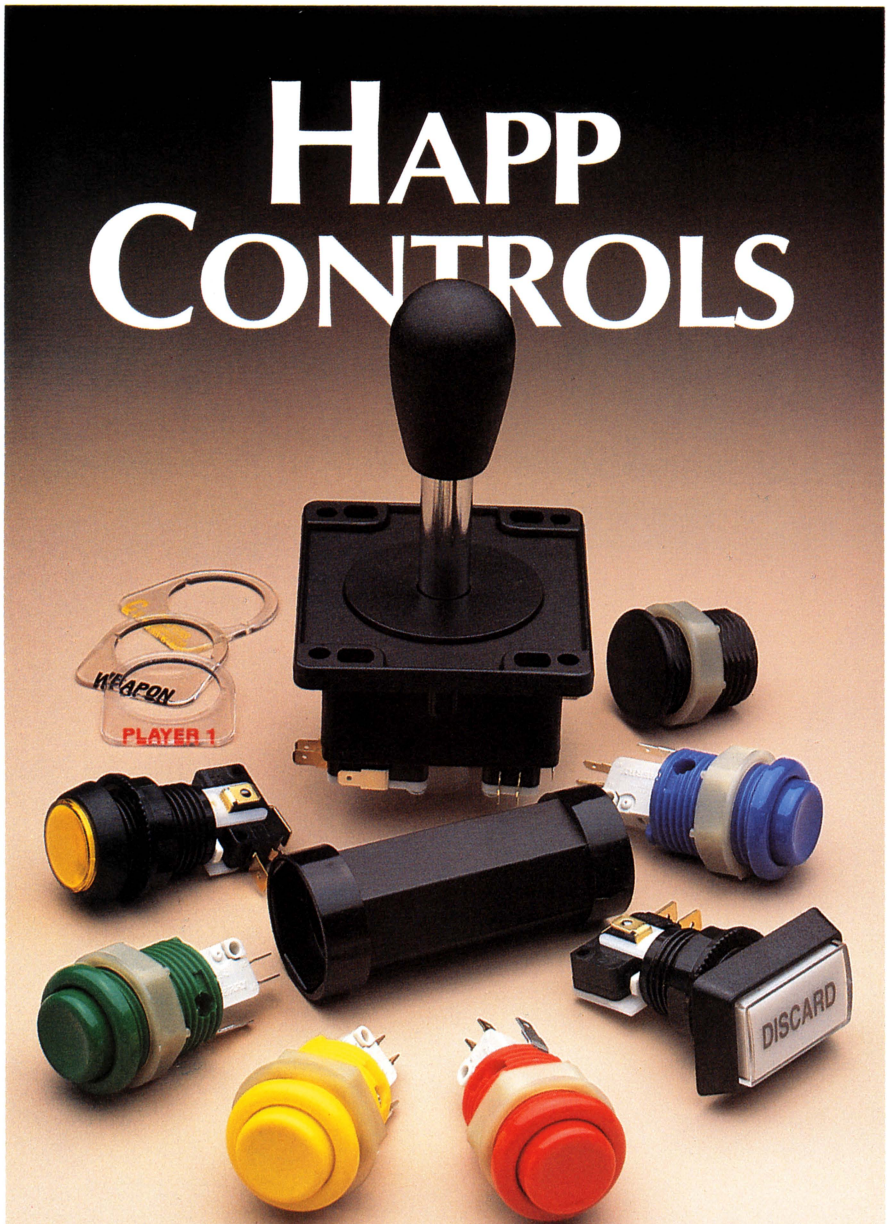

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Shopping malls: friend or foe? 43
Two articles on the debits and credits of shopping mall locations give the viewpoints of both beleaguered operators and bedeviled manufacturers, all looking for a slice of the same entertainment pie.

Coinman: Gary Stern 64
Who's behind the Data East pinball division? Gary Stern, son of Sam Stern, grew up in the business working summers with his famous dad. In 1986 he teamed with Data East to become the new kid on the pinball block.

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COVER

From homestyle scientific experiments to *Little Casino* and *Super Duper Casino* is a big leap, but the creative mind of Mike Pace just naturally runs miles ahead of the pack. Find out about the young mastermind behind U.S. Games and his line of successful countertop games. He pledges: "We're going to remain dedicated to the countertop market. We're continuing to design new software based on the feedback from operators."

THIS COULD BE THE KIT HIT OF THE YEAR! SHADOW DANCER™ marks the return of the powerful young Ninja warrior that made *SHINOBI*™ a smash hit, and is the high drama action game your customers love.

A young Ninja warrior and his attacking canine partner, match martial arts skills with a brutal band of highly trained terrorists. Their mission: Neutralize time bombs planted by the terrorists and destroy the syndicate that controls them. Fast–paced action moves across an urban landscape that includes airports, bridges, warehouses, sewers, and a space shuttle launching pad. Sega's brilliantly designed "video sets" add unequaled impact to game play.

The unique power of Sega's new computer architecture greatly enhances sound effects, graphics simulation, and player control. Using conventional buttons and joystick, players can control the action of both the Ninja warrior and his dog.

Game play progresses through four exciting rounds and 15 action–packed stages. The SHADOW DANCER kit comes complete with circuit board JAMMA wiring harness, full cabinet graphics, twin control sets with motion control joy stick, in–cabinet control panel with volume control, service switch, test switch, and high–resolution graphics.

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EQUIPMENT POLL

Buying the right game is a "make-or-break" proposition for the operator, who must have both monthly and ongoing analyses of game performance. This chart is designed to give the operator information he needs to guide his purchases. The "longevity indicator" will tell him how long the game has remained high on the chart. The number of months on the Top 10 is important, as is the total number of months on the chart. Future months will include how long the game was in coin-op before being released for the home market. Look to the chart each month for additional polling information.

VIDEO & PINBALL COMBINED

GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE	MONTHS ON CHART	MONTHS IN TOP 10	LONGEVITY POINTS
1. TMNT (dedicated)	Konami	9.89	1	1	50
2. Toki	Fabtek	9.14	1	1	49
3. Bad Cats	Williams	9.14	1	1	48
4. Hard Drivin'	Atari	8.73	9	9	438
5. WWF Super Stars	American Technos	8.72	6	5	240
6. S.T.U.N. Runner	Atari	8.47	1	1	45
7. Police Force	Williams	8.42	3	3	135
8. Monday Night Football	Data East	8.37	3	3	118
9. Elvira/Party Monsters	Bally	8.25	2	2	90
10. Earthshaker	Williams	8.20	9	9	425
11. Super Off Road	Leland	8.14	9	9	424
12. Cyberball 2027	Atari	8.11	3	2	90
13. Golden Axe	Sega	7.90	6	6	272
14. U.N. Squadron	Capcom	7.69	1	1	37
15. Cyclone	Williams	7.67	9	9	365
16. Tecmo World Cup '90	Tecmo	7.67	1	1	35
17. Team Quarterback	Leland	7.59	9	3	203
18. Out Run	Sega	7.58	9	7	328
19. Crime Fighters	Konami	7.51	6	6	250
20. Operation Thunderbolt	Taito	7.50	9	9	373
21. All American Football	Leland	7.41	2	2	68
22. Midnight Resistance	Data East	7.40	1	1	29
23. Turbo Out Run	Sega	7.37	9	8	334
24. Chase H.Q.	Taito	7.35	9	8	306
25. Arch Rivals	Bally/Midway	7.22	6	6	237
26. Black Knight 2000	Williams	7.21	6	6	192
27. Mechanized Attack	SNK	7.21	6	4	160
28. E.S.W.A.T.	Sega	7.16	3	3	52
29. Final Lap	Atari	7.16	8	7	278
30. Crime City	Taito	7.10	1	1	21
31. AfterBurner	Sega	6.84	8	2	151
32. Super Hang On	Sega	6.83	7	1	157
33. Quarterback	Leland	6.80	3	0	31
34. Jokerz	Williams	6.79	9	9	332
35. Cyberball	Atari	6.77	3	0	49
36. Swords of Fury	Williams	6.77	3	3	29
37. Street Smart	SNK	6.75	2	2	57
38. Gang Wars	SNK	6.74	1	1	13
39. RoadBlasters	Atari	6.73	8	8	137
40. Taxi	Williams	6.73	9	9	314
41. Willow	Capcom	6.72	2	2	28
42. Operation Wolf	Taito	6.65	8	4	215
43. Championship Sprint	Atari	6.60	5	5	41
44. NARC	Williams	6.58	7	4	186
45. Pinbot	Williams	6.57	9	9	212
46. Dynamite Duke	Fabtek	6.56	4	4	37
47. Cabal	Fabtek	6.53	9	9	211
48. Banzai Run	Williams	6.50	2	2	19
49. Ninja Gaiden	Tecmo	6.48	9	9	268
50. Sly Spy	Data East	6.47	5	5	71

VIDEO KITS

Game	MFG.	POINT VALUE	Game	MFG.	POINT VALUE
1. Toki	Fabtek	9.14	14. Road Blasters	Atari	6.73
2. WWF Super Stars	Am. Technos	8.72	15. Willow	Capcom	6.72
3. Golden Axe	Sega	7.90	16. Championship Sprint	Atari	6.60
4. U.N. Squadron	Capcom	7.69	17. Dynamite Duke	Fabtek	6.56
5. World Cup '90	Tecmo	7.67	18. Cabal	Fabtek	6.53
6. Crime Fighters	Konami	7.51	19. Ninja Gaiden	Tecmo	6.48
7. Midnight Resistance	Data East	7.40	20. Sly Spy	Data East	6.47
8. Turbo Out Run	Sega	7.37	21. Super Mario 3	Nintendo	6.38
9. Arch Rivals	Bally/Midway	7.22	22. Shinobi	Sega	6.34
10. E.S.W.A.T.	Sega	7.16	23. Capcom Bowling	Capcom	6.31
11. Crime City	Taito	7.10	24. Strider	Capcom	6.21
12. Street Smart	SNK	6.75	25. Final Blow	Romstar	6.21
13. Gang Wars	SNK	6.74			

VIDEO DEDICATED

1. TMNT	Konami	9.89	6. Team Quarterback	Leland	7.59
2. Hard Drivin'	Atari	8.73	7. Out Run	Sega	7.58
3. S.T.U.N. Runner	Atari	8.47	8. Operation Thunderbolt	Taito	7.50
4. Super Off-Road	Leland	8.14	9. All American Football	Leland	7.41
5. Cyberball 2027	Atari	8.11	10. Chase H.Q.	Taito	7.35

PINBALLS

1. Bad Cats	Williams	9.14	9. Swords of Fury	Williams	6.77
2. Police Force	Williams	8.42	10. Taxi	Williams	6.73
3. Monday Night Football	Data East	8.37	11. Pinbot	Williams	6.57
4. Elvira/Party Monsters	Bally/Midway	8.25	12. Banzai Run	Williams	6.50
5. Earthshaker	Williams	8.20	13. High Speed	Williams	6.33
6. Cyclone	Williams	7.67	14. Time Machine	Data East	5.88
7. Black Knight 2000	Williams	7.21	15. Bone Busters	Premier	5.75
8. Jokerz!	Williams	6.79			

OTHER EQUIPMENT: POWER SUPPLIES

1. Peter Chou (7-11-15 AMP)	8.56	4. J-S Sales	5.36
2. Imperial	7.31	5. P505	5.25
3. Hitron	6.84	6. Eygo	5.13

FROM THE EDITOR

A fascinating trip down memory lane

Several months ago I did an interview with Bob Breither, a 50-year veteran of the coin-op industry and a member of the Half Century Club. I noted in the introduction to the interview that it was one of the most rewarding interviews I had done because of his years of wisdom and stories of the old days.

I then attended a meeting of the Half Century Club during the AMOA show in Las Vegas and was again in awe of the tales to be told from men that have devoted entire lifetimes to the coin-op business. The Half Century Club is comprised of people with 50 or more years in the business and charter members with 40 years. Those attending the meeting were Si Redd, Bernie Shapiro, Marty Bromley, John Bilotta, Ed Blankenbeckler, Frank Guerrini, Sal DeBruno, Bob Breither, Irving Margold, Hank Tronick, Marvin Gray, Bob Jonesi, Clyde Love, Joel Kleiman, Bert Betti, Hank Ross, Bob Jones, Sol Lipkin, Lou Bruno, and Steve Kordek. Combined these men have nearly 1,000 years in the business!

Many are retired now, but they are the true roots of what we are today. These men may have different backgrounds—operators, distributors, and manufacturers—but they share a common thread. They all experienced the beginnings of coin-op and have witnessed the evolution of the industry. They have seen history in the making, from simple whiffle games to modern, technologically advanced video games.

Each has a story to tell, and Play Meter is going to devote a special column each month to share with our readers one of these stories. At the Half Century Club meeting, the question arose about what these men had to offer the industry. The answer may be their *savoir faire* and wisdom about what this industry is all about. I can't wait to hear stories about what it was like to be in the industry 60, 50, or 40 years ago.

One of my best friends in the industry is Paul Calamari. He began his industry career at Bally in the '30s, and worked there until several years ago. I never tire of listening to him reminisce about the early days and the pioneers of the industry. I attended a Ballyite party with him two years ago and got to meet some of the legends I had heard him often speak about. I couldn't have had a better time. There is no substitute for experience, and these Half Century Club members are the ones with the background.

Looking to the future, I hope that once we have interviewed these men and have their stories down in our pages, we will be able to compile them into one booklet. I think everyone in this industry will be proud to recognize those that blazed the trails for us and hear their unique narratives.

I'm happily looking forward to the time when I can claim 50 years in the coin-op entertainment industry. Let's see, I only have 37 years to go! □

Valerie Cognevich

Valerie Cognevich
Editor

Congratulations

Congratulations on your 15th anniversary issue. I can remember reading the early issues back when I was still in high school. I always enjoyed the technical coverage given to the new electronic pinball machines.

Brian Crowl
Playfair Shuffleboard Co.
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Ronald McDonald House

Jim and I just sat down with the new issue and saw your fantastic article about the Ronald McDonald Houses! The pictures look great, and the copy is terrific. We are very pleased! Thank you very much for printing the article. We think it will help spur some of the people that we have contacted to decide to donate entertainment equipment.

Just to keep you updated, we now have 36 houses done, 30 with operators or distributors who are working on the project, and 14 with people who have been contacted but have not responded.

Marge Stansfield
Stansfield Vending
LaCrosse, Wisc.

The times, they are a-changin'

I have just received my copy of December's Play Meter. Once again, congratulations on 15 years! Your retrospective of our great industry is both informative and entertaining. Mr. Caire's "Last Word" on the seven-cent quarter was a good reminder to us all. If we expect to survive in the '90s, 25-cent play must go the way of the five-cent cigar and the $1,800 automobile.

We cannot wait for the dollar coin to be our salvation—we must educate location owners and players that in order to build high-quality, reliable, and exciting new games the factories must sell games for a profit.

For distributors to market these games (and finance the product and service the games) they must make a profit. Good games from good distributors won't come "cheap."

If an operator is going to pay good money for new products he must get off 25-cent play. Of course, the other side of the coin is that if an operator expects to get 50-cent (or three-for-a- dollar) play, he must give the player something of value—the latest equipment, well-maintained.

Ten years from now, when Play Meter has its 25th Anniversary Issue, we will be talking about the need to move from dollar play to two-dollar play. Our industry is no different than any other. The survivors will be those of us who are willing to move ahead with the (economic) times.

One thing does bother me about your December Anniversary Issue: Did we really ever look that young?

John Margold
Betson Enterprises

The worst of times

Things are very slow right now and I really do not see it getting better. I think the Red Baron issue hurt me more than it helped me. I do not like to see operators being abused by distributors, nor distributors being burned by manufacturers.

Let's hope the '90s are better. I wish the manufacturers would not be so greedy and would allow others to sell their used printed circuit boards after they are no longer available through their distributors.

Beating the odds

After reading Play Meter today, I was very pleased and proud of the way that Carol Lally has handled the magazine. She was not only devastated by the car accident that took her husband, but was left alone in this business at one of the worst times financially when the magazine was in jeopardy. She also had to raise her children, pay her house note and her office building note.

She and her family and the staff of well-trained employees have overcome all the odds. Play Meter is a leader in its field and maintains that position today.

In the early '70s, Ralph Lally was a salesman in this business and learned it from A to Z. He sold, operated, and repaired many machines in his day. I know that Ralph would be proud of Carol and the staff and what they have accomplished with the magazine.

I'll be looking forward to seeing all of you at your show in March 1990. I have been wanting to write this for a long time. Good luck. Here's looking at you, kid—you beat the odds! □

Gary Domino, Sr.
Domino Amusements

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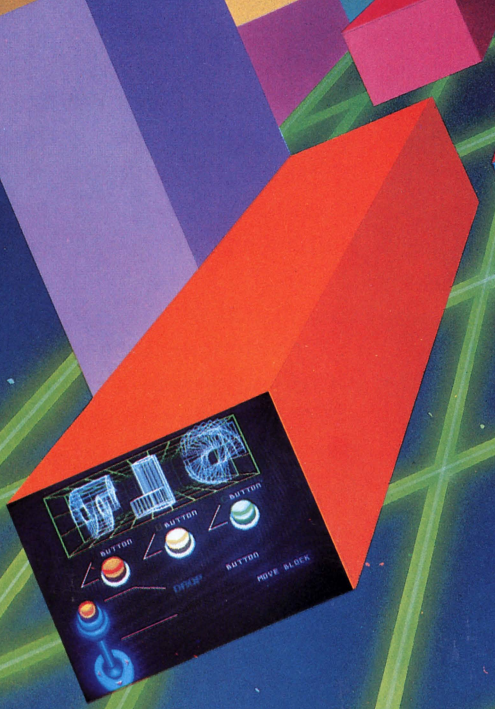

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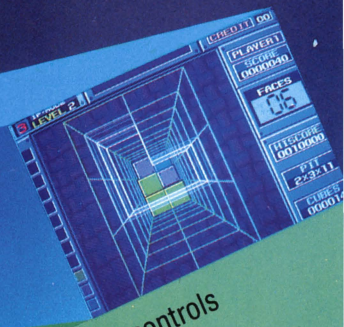

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Big brother lurks around the corner

When Aldous Huxley's novel ''1984'' was first published, the idea of Big Brother looking over your shoulder at every turn was scary and yet distant. Surely it was all fantasy. No such thing could ever happen in our society. Think again, especially if you are a jukebox operator who has come under the scrutiny of the performing rights societies, ASCAP and BMI.

The long arms of these associations have touched many an operator across the country. Forget the fear of God. Their investigators and attorneys will instill another fear: a six-figure lawsuit!

It's no secret that both societies are heavy-handed in their zeal to enforce jukebox licensing across the country. They are widely disliked, to put it mildly. ''There is a definite disparity of power between these societies and the average operator,'' noted one industry member. ''Their pockets are deep and they can be tough.''

What's the best advice when dealing with ASCAP and BMI? Try to avoid any confrontation by vigilantly checking that all jukeboxes have the license clearly displayed. Your company can be strained to the limit by the weight of legal fees incurred in a fight to the death with either of these societies.

If you have not checked to be sure the stickers are on each and every box, take a periodic recheck. Don't depend on your collector to check or install the licenses. Be sure to carefully record the purchase of each sticker and oversee its installation in your office before a new jukebox goes out on location. If the jukebox is already out, double check. Don't assume you have all the bases covered, only to sadly discover during the throes of a lawsuit that you are one short.

Let it go without saying that a license fee that has jumped from $8 to $63 per unit over recent years is a hard pill to swallow. Let it also go without saying that jukeboxes have ''made'' many artists and songs. There has been no gratitude shown for the contribution of jukeboxes and their operators in the demand for music. Desires for even higher license fees are laughable from the operator's standpoint.

The chance of inviting a lawsuit, however, is too great a gamble. Distasteful as it is, compliance is the only way to insure a trouble-free music business. Representatives of the performing rights societies could tap you on the shoulder at any time. Not unlike the Internal Revenue Service, no one needs the scourge of the ''red flag.'' Consider it malpractice insurance. You hate to pay the tab, but what choice do you have? Our business is now among those subject to a ''lawsuit happy'' mentality. □

Bonnie Theard

Bonnie Theard
Managing Editor

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TAKE OUT THE OLD — BRING IN THE NEW!

Mike Shaw

Mid-day maverick turns CEO

Mike Pace: The man inside U.S. Games

One pleasant fall evening in 1970, Mr. and Mrs. James Pace were relaxing in their comfortable home in a quiet Atlanta neighborhood. Suddenly, their son Michael burst from his upstairs bedroom and scrambled downstairs, yelling, "Get out! Now!" The urgency of his plea, coupled with their long familiarity with their son's favorite pastimes, told them not to question the directive.

Almost before the front screen door slammed behind them, they felt the shock of what seemed a tremendous explosion and heard the sound of windows literally being blown from their casings.

"Fortunately, nobody was hurt," U.S. Games president Mike Pace recalls. "But it took us two days to clean up the debris and five weeks to make the upstairs livable again!"

This was the kind of incident that marked the childhood of Mike Pace. It certainly demonstrated his passionate interest in science, which later was focused on electronics, then computers. It also marked his unwillingness to learn at the plodding rate scientific knowledge was doled out in school science classes. And it still characterizes the way the 32-year-old Pace approaches his work as both chief engineer and CEO of U.S. Games, with a passion for true innovation and a determination to direct his own course.

Perhaps many of Pace's high school buddies would be amazed to see him as a CEO, but few would be surprised at his innovativeness. He was much more than the school prankster; he elevated the art to a new level! Consider the time he clandestinely installed a broadcast facility in the hat closet of the band room. Called the "mid-day maverick" by the Northside High School News, Pace repeatedly tapped into the school intercom system, broadcasting extensive passages from rock 'n roll hits of the day to early afternoon classes. Pace frustrated school officials during the spring semester of 1975 with his intermittent broadcasts that culminated with the entire album cut of "Inna Gadda Davida" during a final exam.

Mike Pace

"His passionate interest in science was later focused on electronics, then computers."

Pace was far more interested in electronics and computers than in attending school, and his lack of interest in the structured environment of Northside High cost him a diploma. Despite never graduating from high school, he has lectured to students in Atlanta's proudest institution of higher learning, Georgia Tech, on laser design, a skill Pace acquired while developing some of the original laser light shows for rock bands and amusement parks.

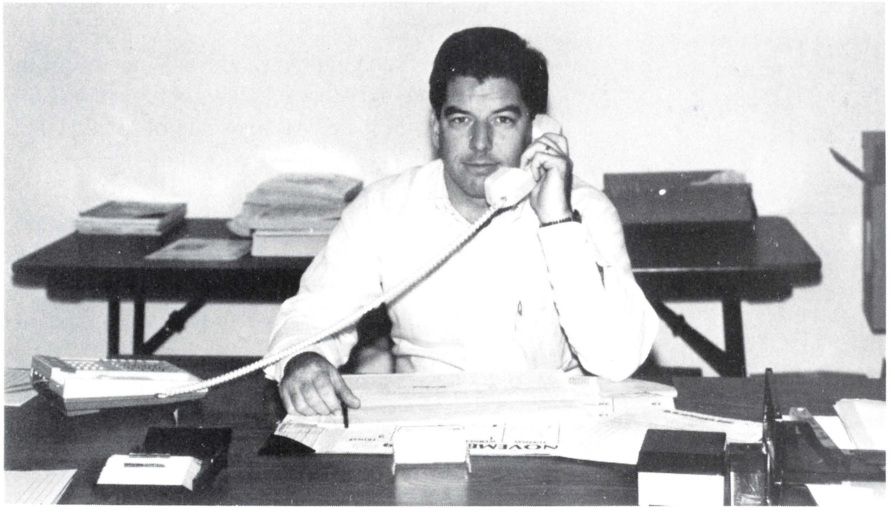
Pace might have had more respect for school had the school shown more respect for his genius. He was disqualified from his 10th grade Science Fair when the judges ruled he cheated on his project. The judges reasoned that no 10th grader, without professional assistance, could build a control unit that turned down the volume of a stereo when the phone rang, acted like a phone speaker system through which the two parties could converse, and then reactivated the music volume once the conversation ceased.

A few days later an observer from AT&T, recognizing the mistake of the judges, invited Pace and his science teacher to New York to visit Bell Laboratories. Still, the damage done by the school judges couldn't be erased. "I was so turned off," Pace recalls, "I didn't go to school for months."

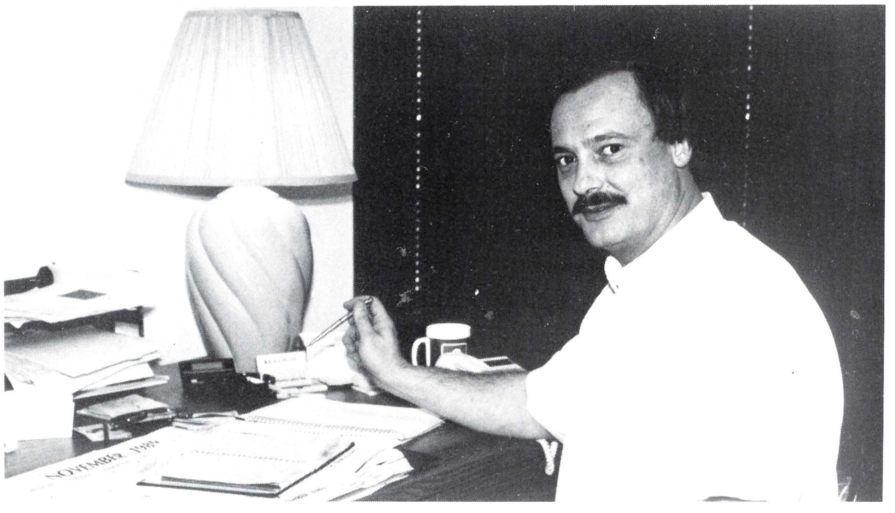
Instead of school, Pace looked to the job

Pace has built a sales team of seasoned pros ...

Mike Horan



Dickie Hanner



Doug Connor

market to satisfy his passion for electronics. He took his first job at the age of 12 repairing pinball machines at a neighborhood arcade. He spent more time working on computers at the city school system's computer center than he did in high school classes. And, after finally giving up on school in 1976, he designed and built the electronics for what became one of the city's most respected music recording studios.

In 1977, Pace began looking for ways to make the projects he was working on more profitable. He put together his first company to design, manufacture, and market one of the first telephone soliciting devices. He scored his first major success after a firm he worked for, which sold some of the first office computers, went out of business. Almost anyone in the Southeast who had bought an OSI computer had to turn to Pace for repairs—a frequent necessity—or for system software upgrades. He capitalized handsomely, billing more than $90,000 as Pace Age Technology at age 21.

"Little Casino established a market of its own. The pure countertop game had long-term adult appeal."

It was through Pace Age Technology that Pace returned to his first love—electronic games. Late in 1979 he launched his coin-op career as the first video countertop game designer, developing the game *Little Casino.* Pace would ultimately sell more than 20,000. Within the first three months, Pace had developed innovations like the multiple-games-in-one concept.

By 1981, *Little Casino* had established a market of its own. The pure countertop game had the long-term, adult appeal provided by such traditional favorites as Draw Poker and Black Jack but without any of the gambling circuitry that was bringing the so-called "gray area" countertop poker games under legal attack.

As fast as *Little Casino* etched out a market for itself, it was slow to bring attention to Pace or Digital Controls, the company he formed to manufacture and market the game.

"We sold thousands and thousands of games before anybody took us seriously," he noted. "The mainstream video game manufacturers thought it was just another gray area game, and the people who were making gray area games didn't believe we could sell poker games that didn't pay off."

Even when Digital Controls did gain stature as a manufacturing presence to be reckoned with, Pace stayed out of the limelight, preoccupied with engineering hardware and software improvements. Not until 1985, when poor investments outside the game industry forced Digital Controls into bankruptcy, did Pace step out from behind his computers to start—and this time manage—his own company.

The U.S. Games that Pace presides over today may seem to betray his character. The game around which the company was built, *Super Duper Casino*, an evolution of *Little Casino*, is known for its consistent earnings, dependable performance, and is the mainstay of the industry's most stable market.

Playing the game according to operator input

"I don't operate games, so getting input from operators is essential to me," says Mike Pace.

In fact, every one of the games Pace has installed into *Super Duper Casino* during the last two years has come as a result of operator input.

"I regularly talk with 10 to 15 operators a week," Pace noted. He looks to talk with all countertop operators about their business and invites operators to call him with ideas on what U.S. Games can do to help them improve profits.

Still, a closer look reveals that the midday maverick has not changed so much as sophisticated his style. The cleverness and the passion still dominate, as evidenced by his new mechanical helicopter game, *Midnight Rescue*, a new generation video lottery game he developed for South Dakota's state lottery, and still most important to Pace, new enhancements for what is now an 18-in-1 *Super Duper Casino*.

"We're going to remain dedicated to the countertop market," Pace observed, "and to manufacturing for the many operators who continue to be successful in that marketplace. Our latest innovations will be seen in a new generation printed circuit board with truly remarkable graphics. We're also continuing to design new software based on the feedback we get from operators."

Such innovations may not blow the second-story windows out, but that's fine with Pace. At this stage of his life, he's more concerned with blowing the competition away! □

Mike Shaw is a former managing editor of Play Meter. He is a founder and directs the editorial efforts of NewsLetters Plus, an Atlanta-based publisher of business literature.

Ray Bell (l) and his staff test games so relentlessly that Debra Summers (r) sometimes feels like the Maytag repairman.

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Doing away with 25-cent play

Bally/Midway has done an interesting comparison of goods that have risen in cost to keep up with inflation—in relation to coin-op's stagnant quarter play—since 1972. "The Quarter: Its Purchasing Power" points out that a quarter was worth 25 cents in 1972; by 1989, that value had plummeted to seven cents.

Here are some examples: the minimum wage ($1.60 in 1972; $3.35 in 1989, for an increase of 109 percent); a gallon of unleaded gasoline (43 cents to $1.16; 170 percent increase); a McDonald's Big Mac (55 cents to $1.45; 164 percent increase); a half-gallon of whole milk (30 cents to 89 cents; 197 percent increase); a cup of coffee (15 cents to 55 cents; 267 percent increase); and box seats to a Chicago Cubs baseball game ($3.50 to $9.50; 171 percent increase).

Bally also compared the worldwide price-per-play for coin-op games. In Germany, it's one deutsch-mark; the U.S. equivalent is 52 cents. Here are a few others: France (three francs; 47-cent equivalent); Sweden (five krona; 77-cent equivalent); Switzerland (one Swiss franc; 62-cent equivalent); Belgium (20 Belgian francs; 50-cent equivalent); and Japan (100 yen; 70-cent equivalent).

What's the point? According to Bally, "It's simple. For over 15 years, the standard price of an electronic amusement game has remained at 25 cents, while every other form of entertainment has skyrocketed in price. The time has come for our industry to play catch-up with inflation. You deserve a raise!"

Udo Nickel of Euro Games

Euro Games chosen by Bally/Midway

Midway Manufacturing Co. has appointed EGS Euro Games as distributor of the Bally pinball and Bally/Midway video product lines. The German company, headed-up by Udo Nickel, is the newly formed subsidiary of Nova Apparate; it's part of the Paul Gauselmann Spielgerate group of companies.

"We are very pleased to take on the line," said Nova chief Hans Rosenzweig. "Bally has taken a fresh turn toward engineering product that is not only underlined with superb electronics, but is filled with innovative design features and very appealing sound and graphics."

Nova is considered Europe's largest importer of coin-op games.

Seminar dates added

New dates and sites have been added to the list of regional seminars to be co-conducted by Frank "The Crank" Seninsky and Star Tech Journal. These seminars, which are to be held at distributorships across the country, are for company owners or top-level managers (Seninsky's group) or advancing technicians (Star Tech's group).

Here are the current dates and sites: Jan. 20-21: Brady Distributing in Charlotte, N.C.; Feb. 10-11: American Vending Sales in Elk Grove, Ill.; Feb. 24-25: Shaffer Distributing Co. in Columbus, Ohio; March 31-April 1: Birmingham Vending in Orlando, Fla.; April 21-22: New England Coin in Norwood, Mass.; and May 19-20: Betson Pacific in San Francisco, Ca.

Advance registration is $250 for each group; there is a 10 percent discount for multiple registrations from the same company. Late registration is $275 (less than seven days prior to the seminar date).

For topical and general information, contact Seninsky at (201) 287-4990 or James Calore, Star Tech Journal, at (609) 662-1080.

This group of Florida technicians completed the technical training session at Randy Fromm's Arcade School. It was held in Orlando in late September.

Montana company sues operator

Montana-based Video Gaming Northwest has filed suit against Automatic Music Service, claiming the latter copied a copyrighted computer program. "American Keno Update" provides an internal counting meter for keno machines made before the technology was available.

"This program was available for licensing to all Montana operators at $200 per copy," said Greg Mullally, president of Video Gaming Northwest. "Since our firm and Automatic Music was unable to reach a reciprocal parts agreement, (they) chose to 'steal' the program. All the other coin operators in the state licensed and are currently using the program."

Mullally seeks payment of $100,000 plus damages. He estimates that liability could easily exceed $2 million.

"Mr. Lippon (the president of Automatic Music) and his people have been working with AMOA to try to develop model legislation for various states regarding gambling games," Mullally said. "Perhaps it's time to examine whether Lippon's business probity is such that our organization wishes to be publicly connected with him."

Elvira has promo tie-in with Pepsi-Cola

Bally/Midway conducted a successful radio promotion campaign for *Elvira and the Party Monsters* during the month of October, tying-in the hot pinball game with Pepsi-Cola's Mug Root Beer and Mandarin Orange Slice soft drinks.

"With *Elvira and the Party Monsters*, we not only have a sensational pinball machine, but also a fantastic celebrity tie-in that's afforded us a unique opportunity to further promote pinball in the consumer marketplace," said Steve Blattspieler, vice president of marketing and sales for Midway Manufacturing Co., manufacturers of Bally Amusement Games. "As spokesperson for Mug Root Beer and Mandarin Orange Slice this fall, Elvira's presence was everywhere."

Specifically, a multitude of listeners in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle were given a chance to win an *Elvira* pin of their own. Concluded Blattspieler, "We're obviously very encouraged with this budding relationship with Pepsi-Cola, and hopefully this program will be just the first of many to come."

The Mistress of the Dark beside her pinball, *Elvira and the Party Monsters.*

Plans finalized for NDA tourney

The board of directors for the AMOA National Dart Association have announced plans for the 1990 International Team Championships of Electronic Darting, a.k.a., Team Dart V. This will be the fifth in a series of league-culminating tournaments offered to AMOA-NDA charter holders and their nationally sanctioned players.

The tournament will take place at the Sahara Resort Casino in Las Vegas, last year's host site, on May 2-5. "The staff and management of the Sahara are very pleased and proud to have been selected once again as the host hotel for this international tournament," said Larry Paluzzi, events manager for the hotel.

Team Dart IV attracted players from 32 states and four foreign countries; they earned championship titles in eight separate events within three divisions. Total prize money and awards topped $40,000.

Planning and league competition is currently underway here and abroad. For more information on this event—which is co-sponsored by AMOA, Valley Recreation, and Merit Industries—contact Joseph W. Conway, Executive Director, AMOA-NDA, 141 W. Vine St., Milwaukee, WI 53212; (414) 263-2444; FAX (414) 265-9199.

In related news, Kirk McKennon has been appointed tournament director for this year's tournament. He has an extensive background in electronic darts; in fact, he served in the same capacity for Team Dart I and II. McKennon has been league manager for American Amusement Arcades in Minneapolis—one of the largest and most respected league programs in the country.

Association moves

For those who have dealings with the Ohio Coin Machine Association, be advised that they've moved to a new building. The address is 2011 Riverside Drive, Suite 450, Columbus, Ohio 43218. The new telephone number is (614) 486-8677.

Presenting a $10,000 check to Virginia and Earl Wells (c) are, from left: AMOV president Rex Whitley; John Newberry, chairman of AMOV's auction committee; and AMOV executive director Charles Rowland.

Association donates money for transplant

At its quarterly meeting for the fall, the Amusement and Music Operators of Virginia (AMOV) decided to help one of its own by donating $10,000 for a life-saving liver transplant. Earl and Virginia Wells of Petersburg Amusement received the check on behalf of Mrs. Wells; they are long-time members of AMOV.

The association's board of directors auctioned off door prizes at the 1989 convention to raise money for her. The resultant $10,000 gave Mrs. Wells the necessary funds to proceed with the operation. The couple were visibly moved by the size of the gift and the caring displayed by AMOV.

Coinco awarded its "Distributor of the Year" award to David Hall of Rowe International-Los Angeles at the recent NAMA show in Chicago. It was handed out a cocktail party celebrating the company's 30th year in business. Pictured, (l to r): Bob Smith, Coinco's Western regional sales manager; David Hall; Bill Murphy, Coinco's assistant vice president of marketing; and Coinco president Jack Thomas Jr.

Veryfine's Kathy Slattery

Slattery gets Veryfine flattery

Kathy Slattery, vending territory sales manager for Veryfine Products Inc., was recently awarded the Veryfine President's Cup for sales excellence. The award was presented by company president Samuel Rowse at Veryfine's national sales meeting in Westford, Mass.

Each year, the President's Cup is awarded for outstanding sales performance. It is based on strict criteria, including quality, honesty, innovation, fairness, and total involvement in the Veryfine sales force.

"Kathy has added a great deal to Veryfine's vending sales division because of her creativity, enthusiasm, sales expertise, and dedication to the company," said Dennis Dakin, vice president of vending sales. "She has a unique ability to understand the various needs of individual vend operators, and has established very solid relationships for Veryfine in the West Coast."

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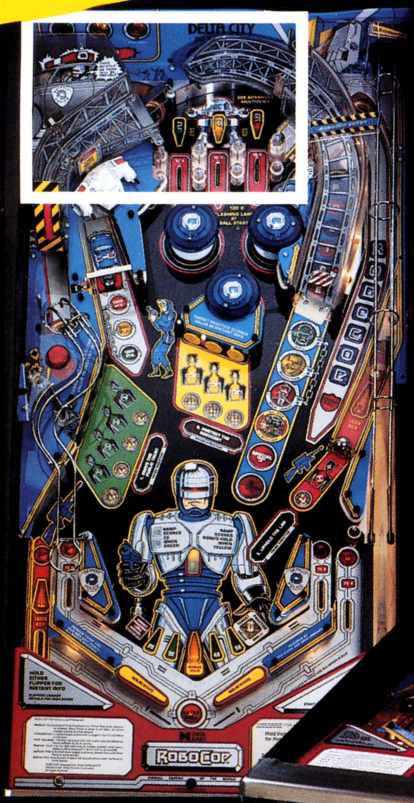

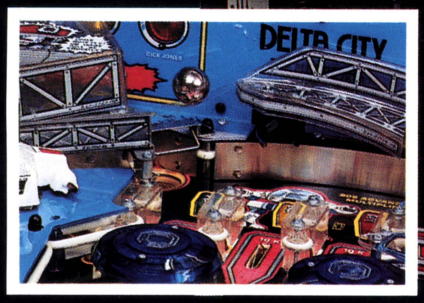

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Upswing for redemption

Are we in the midst of a redemption-game boom? Art Warner and Wylie Irwin of Coin Concepts believe so. Theirs and other redemption companies exhibited their wares at the IAAPA show in Atlanta, and the response to these pieces was most enthusiastic.

"*Jr. All American, Toss Em*, and *Starburst* really kept the customers coming," said Warner, speaking in reference to Coin Concepts' three latest games. In fact, the first run on *Jr. All American* is sold out; a second run is planned for early this month.

Continued Warner, "Wylie and I predicted redemption (ticket/token awards) games were about to explode. It's always nice to be in the right spot at the right time. This gives us a total of 11 games introduced to the market place."

More adults playing videos

A recent poll reveals that in homes where the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) was purchased for children, 61 percent of the adults now participate in video game play. The poll, which surveyed 400 U.S. consumers of kid's toys, also found that 89 percent of parents make their purchases based on the toy's ability to promote family interaction.

These figures should bode well for the coin-op end of video game play. It points out that parents, once turned off or intimidated by video games, are more willing to play them at home. In turn, when the time come to bring their kids to an arcade, they will be more comfortable to take part, rather than stand aside and watch. The poll also reflects video's acceptance among parents as a form of entertainment for their children.

Smart Industries redesigns its cranes

The recent IAAPA show in Atlanta served as the backdrop for Smart Industries' unveiling of the newly styled *Clean Sweep* cranes. This line of cranes consists of the single, super single, double, and triple units.

The new 1990 models include gold aluminum trim; two double stainless-steel prize doors, which are tamper resistant and coat hanger proof; a new height size design on the coin mechanism door console, containing plywood double doors for the coin mechanisms or optional DBA; improved accessibility to game boards and power supplies; and a new coin chute design.

The 1990 *Clean Sweep* models contain a host of standard features commonly associated with Smart cranes, such as: three skill game options, skill joystick control, fully- adjustable claws, microprocessor game board, one-inch square steel frame tubing, dual coin mechs, and adjustable timer.

Options for 1990 are: $1/$5 bill acceptor with stacker, credit/timer LED readout, rope lights, photo eye prize counter meter, optional push button controls, "motion" sound system, winner light, bubble gym payout, and ticket dispenser.

Smart introduced the new 1990 *Clean Sweep Jumbo* cranes at the IAAPA Show. Two models are available (34-inch wide and 42-inch wide), both with the same features and options as the other models, and with a dropped playfield depth and increased side viewing area.

For more information, contact Smart Industries Corp. Mfg., 1626 Delaware Ave., Des Moines, IA 50317-2938; (800) 553-2442 or (515) 265-9900; FAX (515) 265-3148.

Seeburg Corp. was honored with the inaugural AMOA President's Award at AMOA Expo '89, given for its innovation and achievements in the jukebox industry. Seeburg was, among other things, the first jukebox company to incorporate CD technology. Presenting the award to Seeburg president Nick Hindman (r) is Clyde Knupp, AMOA's immediate past president.

Schultz awarded

John Schultz, general manager for Weymouth Distributing Co., was recently honored with the "Supplier of the Year" award at the annual California Automatic Vendors Council (CAVC) meeting in Monterey. He has been with Weymouth for 10 years, five as general manager. Schultz's vending career spans 19 years.

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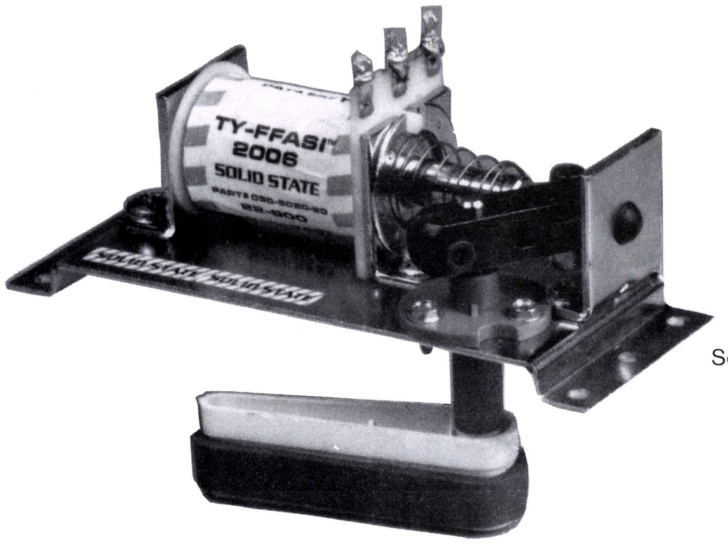

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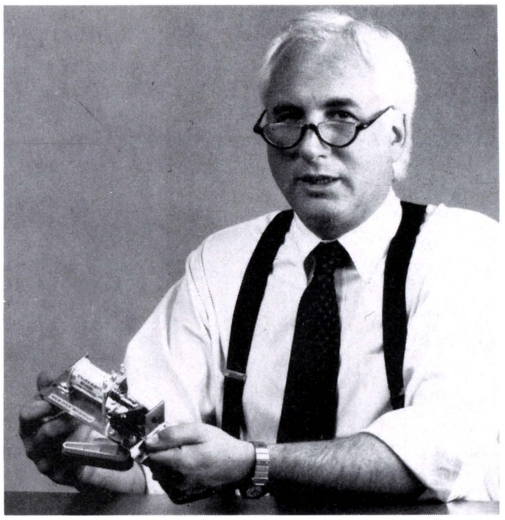

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Steve Piantieri

What do you mean, "No jukeboxes???"

On a recent trip to Italy to attend the Park Show International, I took time out to notice what coin-op devices are in the Italian bars. I was shocked to find not one jukebox. Lots of wine but no Willie Nelson.

The Italian bar scene is alive and well, but with one distinct difference from its American counterpart—a lack of jukeboxes. The bars in Italy are more of a combination snack bar/meeting place than a tavern. In Italy, the locals pop in and out for a quick espresso and a bite to eat. They're in and out in under two minutes, so it seems. This, coupled with a general lack of space, has left the land of wine and pasta with no music in its bars.

The few pool tables I saw cost 3,000 lire ($2.25) to play and had no provision for a bill acceptor. Can you imagine having to shove nine quarters into a coin chute to play a game of eight ball?

The most common table brand name was Longoni, a Dynamo look-alike. The playing surface was more of a nylon fabric than the poly/wool cloth used in the United States.

Video games were well-represented but with a dual pricing strategy. All videos in the bars were priced at 300 lire (25 cents), yet the same games in the numerous gamerooms were 500 lire (40 cents). The variety and upkeep of the games was excellent, matched by the cleanliness of the gamerooms.

Most of the video games had automotive themes. I first thought nothing of it. Realizing that many of the European ex-

Varied amusement rides and games, mostly auto-related, were displayed at the Park Show International.

A player samples one of the *Bingotronic* video games while another tries the *Mouth of Truth* novelty game that "answers all questions."

oticar manufacturers are all located in central Italy (Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati, Alfa Romeo, Lancia, and Fiat), I'm sure that cars occupy a large portion of an Italian's "escapism" via video games.

Rimini, Italy, hosted this year's Park Show at the end of October. The city is situated on the Adriatic, or eastern coast of Italy. Rimini offers a temperate climate and large new exposition center. The trade show featured the latest in rides and games for theme parks and carnivals.

Among the coin-op items were offerings by Atari, Sega, and Namco, plus various redemption games. About 100 exhibitors, mostly European, displayed equipment.

Our parts suppliers, like Wico and Penn-Ray, have Italian counterparts. Alberici is a large wholesale parts house for the Italian coin-op industry. Prices are high compared to what we're used to. The selection of items is limited and all accounts are on a COD basis. I hope Imperial International doesn't get wind of this.

The Rimini Expo Center, officially called the Ente Autonomo Fiera Di Rimini, is

"Can you imagine having to shove nine quarters into a coin chute to play a game of eight ball?"

also the site of the Primavera Coin-Op Trade Show in March 1990. This is the one to attend for amusement and vending companies, while the Park Show International is more suitable for those engaged in traveling entertainment and amusement park ventures.

Since money is money, whether it's lire or dollars, the language barrier is not a problem. Everyone understands expenses, cash flow, and ROI. Translators are available for attendees. Contact the Expo Center for registration by phoning 011 0541 782000. Valentino Pesaresi is the director and will coordinate your registration. Entry into the trade show is free; just bring your business cards and your Alka-Seltzer. □

Editor's Note: Steve Piantieri studied in Perugia, Italy, in the late '70s. He returns once a year, he says, "to overeat, practice obscene hand gestures, and sample the local wines." Steve is currently a vice president, along with his brother, at Charles Music Co. in Orlando, Fla. (Tourist World). His father, Charles Piantieri, started the business in 1953. They currently operate jukeboxes, videos, darts, and pool tables.

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IAAPA offers crowd miles of exhibits

It's no boast—the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions' (IAAPA) 71st Annual Convention and Trade Show offered this year's visitors almost three miles of aisle shopping at over 1,600 booths, a 20 percent increase from last year.

IAAPA continues to feature equipment and workshops specially tailored to operators of amusement parks and recreational centers across the country and on an international scale. The 1989 show at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta in mid-November was the largest ever.

Substantial topics were included in the educational program, among them: "Water Parks—the New Wave," "Finance—Lessons from the Past," "New Technology in Entertainment," and "Computing for the Terrified." Four workshops were translated into Spanish, German, French, and Japanese.

Awards were presented for the most original coin-op booths, with Bob's Space Racers winning first place and Betson Enterprises placing second.

Plush suppliers were well-represented and introduced many new items to the merchandising arena. Nancy Sales Co. exhibited licensed characters from three syndicated TV series: "Jetsons," "Flintstones," and "Scooby Doo." Ace Novelty presented a line of licensed figures from the popular Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles seen in comic books, on TV, and on video screens.

Outdoor amusement rides, midway-style games, sports games, kiddie rides, and redemption and novelty pieces were displayed. The American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) booth featured videos, pinball, and air hockey. Sega Enterprises also exhibited video equipment, including its driving game *Super Monaco GP*.

Next year the show will be held in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 14-17. □

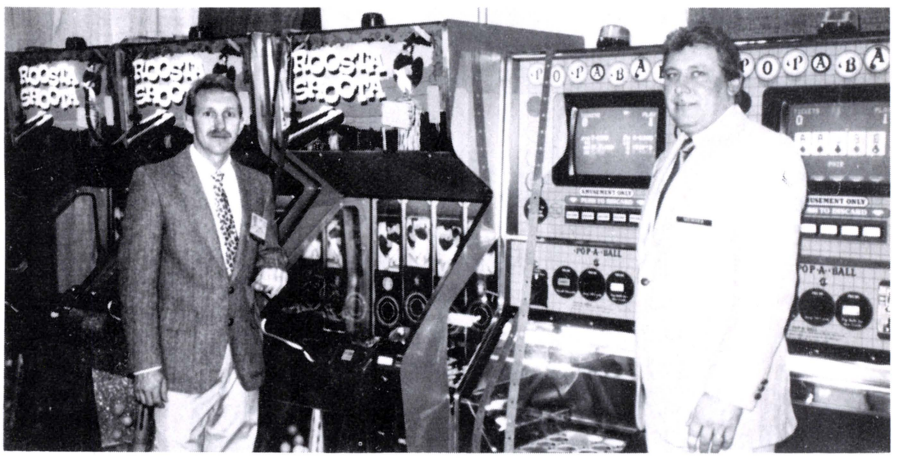
John Margold (l) of Betson greets Dick Adams of Atari Operations and Jerry Clegg of Nadel & Sons by the new *Flash Four*.

A happy group from Acme Premium, (l-r): Jack Kelly, Tom Dawson, and Steve Turner.

The Intermark gang by the *Quarterback Challenge*, (l-r): Kim Cook, Ashley Clinton of The Smiling Lion Co. (exclusive United Kingdom distributor for Intermark), Marty Sullivan, and Mike O'Connor.

Bob's Space Racers' Glenda Cassata Cook (l) and Joyce Cassata.

PMI's Jerry Lozano with a wall of company plush.



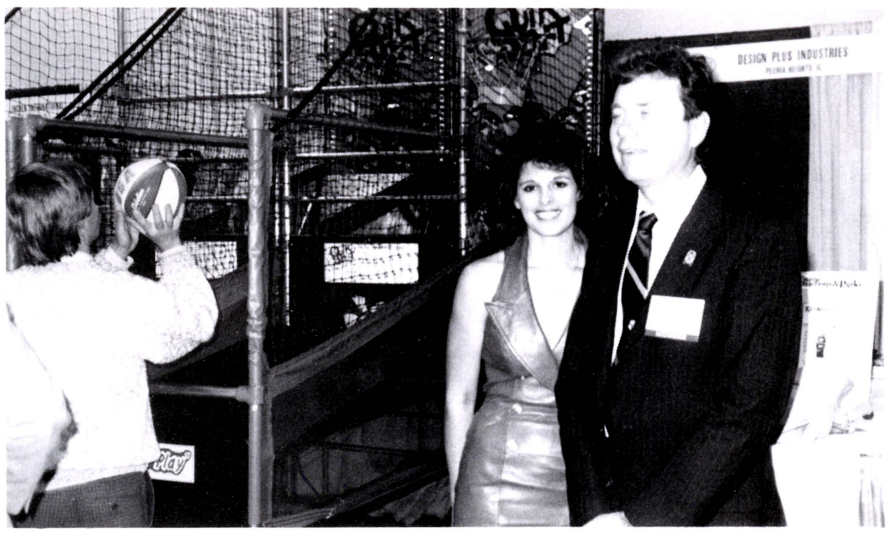
Bob Keelyn (l) and Bob Harzer show off the new *Roosta Shoota* and *Pop-A-Ball* at the Coastal Amusement booth.

A show attendee samples *Super Monaco GP* while Sega's Tom Petit talks with a customer in the background.

James Possi clowns around with some of his colorful plush prizes.

Rorie Keller of Ace Novelty with new Superman figure.

At the Kiddies of Florida booth, (l-r): Julio Rodriguez, Eric Torres, and Manuel Ramos.



Diane and Michael Seibert display their basketball game *Quik Shot*.

Ira Erstling of HMS Monaco prepares to show attendees his line of jewelry items.

Meltec's John McEwan by *Big Mouth*.

Sondra Doyle and Pat Talmadge of Doyle & Associates and the new *Gopher Golf*.

Checking out the other games, (l-r): Taito's Rick Rochetti, Leland's Ken Anderson, and Taito's Jim Chapman and Natalie Kulig.

Irwin Margold of the Dream Machine celebrates his 85th birthday with a big hug from Betson model Doris Ragsdale.

Industry wizard Nolan Bushnell (c) demonstrates Axlon's new *Spots* game while software engineer Tian Harter (l) and John Margold of Betson look on.

TMNT makes impact at the Fun Arcade

On a regular Friday evening the Fun Arcade in Metairie, La., draws about 50 patrons at a time sampling the newest games and playing settled favorites. When *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* was added over the Thanksgiving holidays, that number jumped to between 80 and 100 patrons at a time.

"It took a few days and generous 'word of mouth,' then *TMNT* took off," says manager Bobby Daix. "It's been a few months since we had a crowd like that in for a particular game. Kids were actually standing four deep waiting to play."

The Turtles are a very hot item at present and the dedicated four-player game attracted pre-teens as well as older teens searching for new video blood at the arcade. This healthy crowd was good for the entire arcade since those waiting for a turn played other games as well.

The Fun Arcade has received a number of other new videos lately to keep player interest up, including *Cal. 50, AquaJack, Skull & Crossbones, Task Force Harrier*, and the *Track Pak/Super Off Road*.

There's also big news in the pinball arena as *Lights, Camera...Action!, Mousin' Around,* and *Bad Cats* are joining with *Elvira and the Party Monsters* and *Monday Night Football* on 50-cent play.

Daix, a 33-year veteran with New Orleans Novelty Co., says customers are accepting the 50-cent price with "no objections."

Each pinball is clearly marked for 50-cent play on the coin mech, on the front of the game, and at the end of the playfield. Pricing is 50 cents for one game, 75 cents for two, and $1 for three. Just like the potato chip commercial that says "you can't have just one," avid pinball players opt for the $1 choice.

Lionel Smith, Jr., (l) and Bobby Daix by the pinball lineup at the Fun Arcade.

A crowd of teens gather 'round *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

Daix believes in making everything perfectly clear to the customers so they know exactly what they are getting.

Daix runs a tight ship, along with assistant Lionel Smith, Jr., and offers a few brief words that "tell it all" about running a successful arcade. 1) Have a good manager on duty; 2) Keep the location clean and well-lighted inside and out; 3) Don't allow smoking, alcoholic beverages, foul language, or abuse of the machines; 4) Don't allow youngsters of elementary or high school age in the arcade until 2 p.m.; and 5) Put the words Family Arcade on your sign. Short and to the point, Daix says "that's the only way to run an arcade."

To dispel parental worries, the Fun Arcade posts a large sign that reads: "No student under the age of 18 allowed to play the games when school is in session."

Daix and his staff are careful to frequently check outside the building to be sure there is no loitering. The location is directly across the street from a large supermarket, and many parents bring their children by to play games on the weekends when they do the weekly grocery shopping.

There are many "regulars" at the Fun Arcade. Customers run the gamut from grandparents who bring their grandchildren by for an hour or more of entertainment, to the high-powered real estate woman who stops by every week for a good time on the pinball games, then leaves in a Mercedes. Many salesmen stop by in-between appointments on weekdays. The location has been attracting steady customers for over 18 years. □

The successful *WWF Super Stars* still keeps 'em comin'.

A "regular" takes up the challenge of *Cal.50*.

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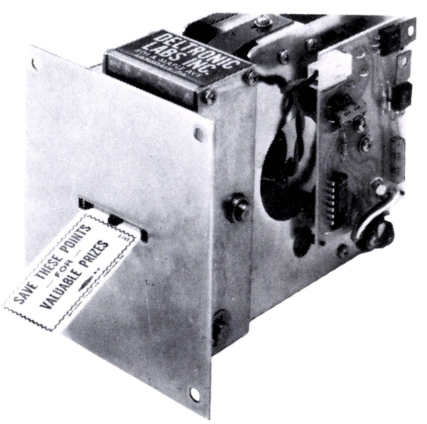

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Al Rodstein

Al at his desk in 1938. No FAX machine here; note the rotary dial telephone!

Al Rodstein made his coin-op career move 55 years ago in Wildwood, N.J., while just a teenager. In fact, in looking at some old photos, it was only four years after graduating from elementary school that he was operating Stanley Sportland in Wildwood. The highlights of his multi-paged resume include opening Stanley's; founding KWIK Cigarette Service in 1936; Al's Own Pennyland in 1937; Arco Sales in 1938; Medley Inc. in 1942; Variety Vending System in 1946; and Hammar Realty in 1958. Al acquired Banner Specialty in 1958 and spun off Amuse-O-Mat in 1960.

Al has an even longer list of personal accomplishments, including serving as president of the Country Club Bowling League; chairman of the Personnel Selection and Training Committee for NAMA; president of the Pennsylvania Automatic Merchandising Council; president of

A.B.I., a small business investment corporation; trustee of the Federation of Jewish Agencies; founding director of AAMA; and co-founder of the Half Century Club.

Whew, that's dedication to the coin-op industry! Of course, what do you expect from a man who met his wife through the playing of a pinball machine! Miriam was playing a pinball machine owned by Al's late brother, Bill. Al explains, "Bill and I went into this location in north Philadelphia, and we saw this beautiful girl playing a pinball machine. Bill asked the store keeper to introduce the girl to me. And that was the beginning of the romance that culminated in marriage a year-and-a-half later." The couple have been as dedicated to their marriage as they have been to the coin-op business. They celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary on Dec. 18.

Today, Al and Miriam spend winters in Florida and summers at their home in Pennsylvania, where they raised three children: Arlene, Marc, and Howie.

Al is a founding member of the Half Century Club, an organization of industry veterans who have 50 years under their belts (or 40 years to qualify as an associate member). Play Meter wants to share the achievements, recollections, and knowledge that this outstanding group has to offer. We will periodically feature a member of the Half Century Club in our Half Century Club Interview. It's hard to explain the awe I feel when I talk with these men that have devoted entire lifetimes to the coin-op entertainment industry. I hope that everyone will experience a little of that feeling when they read these interviews.

This is a farewell party for Al's son Marc when he left Banner to start Space Port with brother-in-law Jim Ginsberg.

Herb and Louisa Rosenthal with Miriam and Al.

Al Rodstein (r) with Tom Brookshier, who ran air hockey tourneys in the early '70s.

You once said that you didn't think the operator was best served by a distributor who operates.

That was the general attitude for an awful long time. Lately, I think most distributors operate. Many were forced into it to get a real feel of the market. There are times when the operator doesn't support the distributor. At times he's too timid about the cost of the equipment. So the distributor has turned to operating. We never did at Banner.

What happened in the industry to change the attitude?

I think it varied by region. There are still

areas where a distributor must buy a certain amount of equipment to satisfy his manufacturer. If he can't sell it, he operates it.

When you first got into distributing, was it common for all distributors to represent virtually all of the manufacturers?

No, that has changed, just as it has in the automobile industry. Way back, a distributor who had one pinball line wasn't apt to have a competitive pinball line. It was the same in music and, in fact, is still that way. A jukebox manufacturer doesn't want a distributor handling more than one music line. It was the same in the game business. Today it's all changed. If a manufacturer finds a distributor with a good organization that is financially responsible, then he is going to deal with him whether or not the distributor handles a competitive line.

Do you think that it will ever work for manufacturers to sell direct to operators?

It has never worked in the past and I don't think it will in the future, simply because the operator needs a local support base. I don't think it would work any better than it would for the automobile manufacturers to sell direct. Where would the user go for service? The distributor is an absolute cog in the wheel.

Had you heard rumors about the so-called Mafia influence in the business before you got into it?

Oh sure, I've heard that all my life. But I really don't give it any credence. When people would confront me, I'd say that I'm sure there are undesirables in banking, restaurants, insurance, you name it. But we never encountered any problems in all the years I was in the business.

Did your kids get into the business?

Yes, my son Marc and my son-in-law Jim Ginsberg worked at Banner before branching out on their own with an arcade chain called Space Port. They operated it very successfully and sold it to Atari. Atari, in turn, sold it to Robert Nahodil. My other son, Howie, came into the business to help me when the electronic pins and video games came on the scene. We were lacking anyone knowledgeable in electronic repair. Howie came in and did a bang-up job. Today he's branched out into creative software. He is president of a company called WaveMetrics.

"I'm really a graduate of the college of hard knocks. I'm a good example of what hard work can do."

You mentioned electronic pins. That was a milestone in the coin-op industry. What were some others you recall?

Along the way there were several things that aided my progress and my career. One was the first flipper game, Gottlieb's *Humpty Dumpty*, that came out when I was still an operator. This must have been in the late '30s.

What was the reaction when it was introduced?

It was revolutionary! However, some people in the business said it wasn't really good. They said it would prolong the action and would take too much time to get the coin. Some just didn't see it as being revolutionary. Whenever something really new comes along there are always those that take a dim view of its potential. It set a new standard. For a while the competitive manufacturers tried to develop games without the flipper, but they were not successful. So every pin manufacturer, unable to fight them, had to join them and add flippers to their games.

The next game that I think was revolutionary was the shuffle alley, which was invented by Lyn Durant and introduced by United Manufacturing Co. in 1949. Durant was assisted very ably by Hank Ross and Iggy Wolverton, who later founded Midway Manufacturing.

How did the shuffle alley change things?

I call it revolutionary in several respects. Number one, it was the vehicle for getting 10-cent play. I was in distributing then. United called and said that they had a great game that was going to cost a lot more than a pinball game, twice as much. They were giving us the

Miriam and Al (r) attended Al and Leah Bettelman's 50th anniversary in 1984. On the left is Al's nephew, Alan Bruck, and his wife Wendy.

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option of having it shipped at five- or 10-cent play. I told them to send a sample and we would decide. After we played it, I called them back and said 10 cents—absolutely! That was a tremendous breakthrough to go from a nickel to a dime.

Did you have trouble going to dime play?

The game hit some strong resistance because of price and size. But we started to promote it. In Billboard magazines of 1950 you will find full-page stories in issue after issue about the TV programs we ran on shuffle alleys.

These were actually live half-hour shows, during prime time, that featured contests. We had the local contests in each location to develop a local champion. Then the local champions appeared on live television playing against each other. It was like "King of the Hill" elimination. The champion at the end of 13 weeks won a brand new Oldsmobile worth about $5,000 in those days. Then we had runner-up prizes like television sets, etc. We had the sports director of CBS and ABC outlets in Philadelphia running the contests on TV.

Did the publicity help your shuffle alley sales?

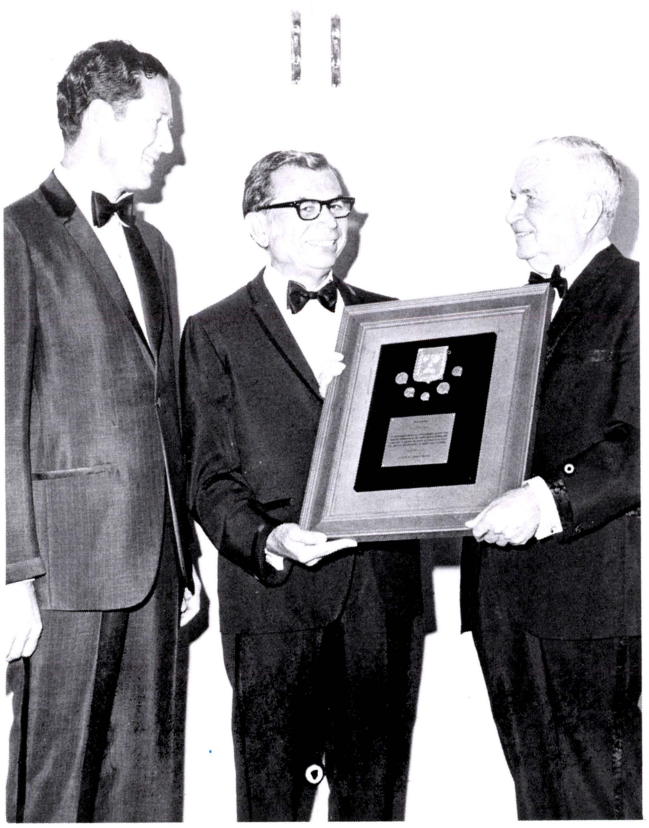
We sold more shuffle alleys than any other distributor in the country. In fact, we sold 1,500 shuffle alleys in one six-week period. This game was retailing for $325, which was a fortune then. A pinball machine was selling for around $169.50 and getting a nickel per play.

"Pinball bashing became some politician's favorite plank in his platform."

Unfortunately, after the first 13-week period—the length of our TV contract—the liquor control board put a stop to the shows. They called it gambling, and contests with prizes were not allowed in liquor-licensed establishments in Pennsylvania.

It is a big complaint today that there are not enough promotions done. Did you get involved with other promotions?

The next time I was heavily involved in promotions was with air hockey. There again, we were the largest distributor of coin-op air hockeys in the world, and it was based on promotion. Air hockey was produced in the '70s. Live television was impossible during prime time, but we did do very interesting and successful promotions in York College and other locations like the Franklin Museum in Philadelphia. Tom Brookshier, the CBS pro football play-by-play man, was the master of ceremonies. I can think of a few people



Al served as chairman of the State of Israel Bonds in 1968. Here he presents an award to the late Joe Ash (c) as Joe Silverman, president of the Philadelphia association, looks on.

The 1968 Miss America with Al at the NAMA show.

that were at some of the promotions: Irwin Margold, Ed Shaffer, and Joe Barton, to name a few.

You obviously felt promotions were an important part of your business. Do you wonder why no one seems to stress it more now?

It hyped the business tremendously. We sold a hell of a lot more equipment on the basis of promotions. There were other promotions by some that didn't turn out too well. Those may have soured some people on the value of promotions. But then there were many that were very successful. I don't know why they don't do more today, except that everything is so expensive. We spent $76,000 on the live TV shuffle alley promotion. In the '50s that was a lot of money. Anything you undertake today will take more money, organization, and attention to detail. You almost need a separate organization for the promotion part of your business. You can't undertake it lightly.

What are some other memorable milestones in the industry?

The next thing that really broke the mold was video games. Sega's *Periscope* and *Grand Prix*, the driving game, were the vehicles for moving to 25-cent play. Very rarely do we have really revolutionary breakthroughs.

Another milestone was even before the first flipper game. The first bumper pinball game was exciting, too. When I first got into the business, the pinball machines were just pins and holes and no electricity. You kept the score manually. I still have one called *Jigsaw Puzzle* by Rock-Ola. *Jigsaw* and *World Series* were the first two games I went into business with in Wildwood in 1935. We had 35 units of just the two games.

We opened the arcade in Wildwood with five-cent play, 10 balls for a nickel. But the people just walked through the place. A nickel was a lot of money in the Depression days. We weren't getting many nickels so we converted back to a penny. That was my first lesson in marketing. If I hadn't changed from a nickel to a penny, I wouldn't be talking to you today about the industry because we would have gone down the tubes. It was a seasonal business only good during July and August. During those two months, after we went to a penny, we took in one million pennies, or a total of $10,000 gross. That was a lot of money considering our rent was $500 for the entire season. We bought the games used for $7 or $8 each!

raise prices on games like the $10,000 to $12,000 driving games. They should be getting a dollar a play. On pool tables they should be getting a dollar for two people to play a game of pool. When you consider the price of everything else in the marketplace today, it doesn't seem unreasonable to me. Higher pricing is an absolute must if we are going to grow and succeed. We are going to have to think positively and have some respect for our investment and respect for the value of the entertainment we are offering.

"If I had it to do over again, I wouldn't do anything different—just more of it."

Since you had the experience of trying to ask a nickel and then having to drop back to a penny, was it hard to increase pricing later?

Not at all. I was very aggressive in that regard. If I had confidence in the value of the play, I was aggressive in pricing. I was a leader in price increases. I think one of the problems today is being too slow in catching up with inflation. Operators get a quarter, but what the hell is a quarter today? Same as a penny was in 1935.

Operators would be well-advised to

Would you want to just be getting into the business now?

That's a good question. I wouldn't want to be starting up again at my age. But if I was younger, definitely yes. I think there are great opportunities. The competition in

Al in 1949, standing by the *ZODI*, which vended printed horoscopes for a quarter. You could also get four photos for a quarter from the Photomaton machine in the background.

some areas is not very aggressive. There are opportunities with the right equipment and the right pricing. Of course, I keep up with what's going on and I'd never say never. If an irresistible opportunity was offered, I'm still open-minded and forward-thinking enough.

Are there more opportunities now than when you did get into the business?

I'd really have to think about that one. It was easier to get into it then. My own total investment in my first venture was $250. My brother-in-law's was $250, and we borrowed $500, so the total capitalization was $1,000. We opened the arcade in Wildwood. To open a first-class arcade today costs big money, like $250,000.

Is the industry here to stay?

Oh, it's here to stay all right, even though it's in a bit of a valley right now. We have always had a lot of fatalities because people underestimated the amount of business acumen that was required. They thought it was easy—just put a machine out, empty the coinbox, and you make a lot of money. But it doesn't work that way. It's a real profession that you have to devote yourself to in order to be a success.

So you believe it takes dedication and hard work to be successful?

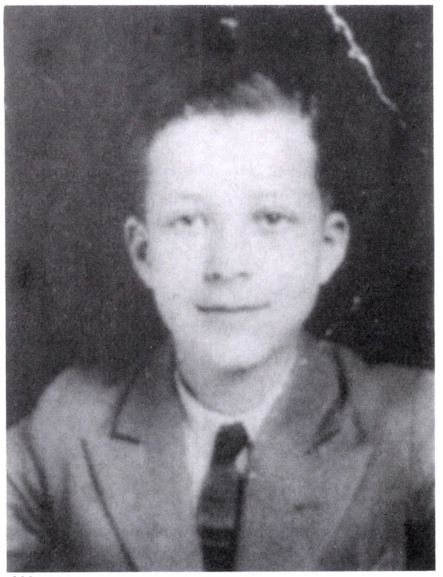
That's right. I'm a high school drop out. My father died when I was five and my mother died when I was 13. When I turned 16 I went to work on a parking lot. At 17 I quit the parking lot and opened my first arcade. I couldn't 't wait to get away from that parking lot. I worked 12 hours a day, six days a week for $15. Then on Sunday I used to work nine hours because the married men didn't want to work on Sunday. I made five bucks on Sunday. So I worked 81 hours a week that year. That's probably why I love this business so much. It did a lot for me. People ask me what college I went to and I tell them I went to Princeton, Penn, Penn State, and Harvard . . . to visit my children! I'm really a graduate of the college of hard knocks. And I'm a good example of what hard work can do.

Based on your years of experience, did you ever in your wildest imagination think that video would have such an impact on this industry?

Not at first. When *Computer Space* and *Pong* came out, I didn't envision the extent of the success. But I did recognize it pretty early and ran with the ball. It looked like an attractive novelty, but I don't think anyone foresaw how it would evolve.

What about the plunge? Was it the worst thing that has happened in this industry?

Oh no. The worst thing that happened to me in this industry was when the pinballs were outlawed first in New York and then



Al in 1931.

in Pennsylvania. The mayor of New York was Laguardia, and he precipitated the drive to declare pinballs illegal. He was a politician that needed a vehicle to be elected. He would get on the radio and really beat pinballs down, telling parents how their children were squandering money gambling on pinballs. They confiscated them and showed the police chopping them up with axes. They put them in the same category with the slot machines. It spread to Philadelphia next. Shortly afterwards, pinball bashing became some politician's favorite plank in his platform.

The ban on pinball put me out of business. I then went into the refurbishing business. I bought the pinballs operators couldn't use because they were illegal and sold them outside of my territory after refurbishing them—actually, I remanufactured them. This was in 1941, when the war production board stopped production on all new equipment because of the war effort.

Did you have any other bad experiences?

I had a real bad one in the vending machine business. The Pennsylvania Legislature decided that every vending machine should pay $50 a year for the privilege of operating. We were operating vending equipment that earned a bottom line of $50 in 12 months; that was about it. So we mounted a charge against the politicians. I led a march through Harrisburg, and we met with several legislative leaders of both parties. In fact, NAMA gave me the Chamber's Legislative Award for my successful efforts in keeping them from legislating us out of business.

The industry has had some bad times in the past, then.

It runs in cycles, just like most other businesses. The politicians leave us alone when we are suffering economically. When we start to do better again, they begin beating on us for more money than we can afford to pay.

Surely there have been other memories of the industry.

One thing I do remember was when I had Variety Vending. In the early '50s we couldn't get pastries from the manufacturers for vending sales. They didn't think it was a market big enough for them to be bothering with. So they wouldn't sell us their products. I explained the situation to my wife and told her that I knew they would go well in some of our locations, like industrial plants and bowling alleys. "You know, honey, the kind of stuff you make at home would sell like hotcakes," I told her! Miriam then set to work with our housekeeper, Birdie, and they baked the most delicious pies and cakes. She would bake them and package them in individual portions. We put them in our vending machines, and they were one of the most popular things we had to sell.

If you had it to do over again, would you do anything different?

I would do even more of the same! Nothing different, just more of it. □

Christopher Caire

Shopping mall locations and the local operator: mutually exclusive?

A Challenges arcade nestled among food court restaurants at the Esplanade Mall in Kenner, La.

"Those holding leases for new mall arcades have to provide both an entertainment and social function."

To most arcade operators, landing a lease within a shopping mall is equivalent to capturing the Holy Grail. The drawback of steep rental costs is usually offset by the built-in customer traffic. Hordes of parental shoppers and their entertainment-starved children pass in front of the arcade daily, but these same people might drive by an arcade on Lennox Street twice a week.

Some operators, though, have expressed concern that these plums might be out of their reach. When harvest time comes, they say, the bounty is being realized by large arcade chains with eye-popping financial statements and money to burn.

But from a mall developer's perspective, the company holding a multi-year lease had better prove that it possesses financial stability and the flexibility to expand, among other things. In so many words, the attitude is something like this: "Local operator, we have nothing against doing business with you, per se, but our needs are thus and so. You can't fulfill these needs; therefore, as mall developer, we must opt for someone who can: XYZ Corporation."

A case study

While many operators with mall locations consider themselves fortunate, there are others whose situations aren't a bed of roses. When can being located within a mall become a pitfall-filled curse? Listen

to the story of Dick Welu, owner of Starcade Ltd. in Dubuque, Iowa.

Welu's arcade has been housed within the same mall since 1974. For the majority of this time, the experience was a positive one.

"It's a terrific advantage to have an arcade within a mall," he said. "Making a living from an arcade that isn't in a mall is no easy proposition. You avoid the security and discipline problems, and the continual traffic allows you to keep games for a longer period of time. Also, malls let you operate larger games, which earn more money and justify their size and cost. You can't do that in an outside location."

The problems started arising for Welu in 1982. Like other operators during the halcyon days of *Pac-Man*, Welu had a booming business on his hands. His small arcade was operating about 30 games at the time, but the bliss was soon to end.

"One day the mall manager came by and told me that the Cafaro Corp., which owned the mall, was going to put another game room next to me," Welu said. "They were going to lease a spot that was three times larger to Bally's Aladdin's Castle. I had another 18 months left on my lease.

"To make a long story short, they told me that they didn't have to honor my lease because I'd bought the game room from a company called Red Baron of Milwaukee," he continued. "That company got in financial trouble and started selling off their 18 or 19 arcades. The problem is, when they sold the arcade to me, I didn't know that the mall developer wasn't aware of the transaction. I took over the spot, but the proper channels hadn't been gone through. The mall let me stay, took my money for eight years, then told me I wasn't supposed to be here when it was advantageous to them. They said they didn't have to honor the lease and that Bally's Aladdin's Castle was going in next door."

Welu's monthly rent at the time was $500, a ridiculously low amount considering the arcade was making about $180,000. This, he feels, is what got the goat of the Cafaro Corp.; they wanted a tenant who could or would pay significantly more, and BAC was that tenant. After bantering back and forth, Welu and his wife finally went to Cafaro's headquarters in Youngstown, Ohio, to work out a deal. They met with president Anthony Cafaro.

A close-up of the Challenges entrance. Inside are 30 videos, four pinballs, one triple crane, one air hockey table, and one photo booth.

"I've been a good tenant for 16 years, and this is what I have to show for it."

"He agreed to give up the lease to Bally's Aladdin's Castle, but the rent they were set to pay was $40,000 a month," Welu said. "I almost dropped off my chair. Even though the industry was doing extremely well, I wasn't going to give up my business by pouring all of the earnings into rent. Then he said that the only way I'd get their lease was to continue paying rent for the spot I was vacating, pay the $40,000 that Bally's was prepared to pay, plus bring in another business into the mall! We wound up having to hold three leases in order to make the deal. I didn't want to, but otherwise my arcade would've been out of business when the lease expired."

Things then fell apart. Charlie Chan's, the fast-food restaurant brought in by Welu, failed miserably. When coin-op's boom turned to bust, he was stuck with two other losing leases. Everything he had made in eight-and-a-half years was poured back into trying to pay the three leases. When the games business didn't rebound, Welu was left standing on the threshold of bankruptcy.

"We paid what rent we could, but it wasn't the full amount owed," he recalled. "Cafaro took us to court and sued for $500,000; this was sometime around '83 or '84. They got a judgment against us, but I wasn't going to contest it because I signed the leases. I knew at the time that they were too high, but I couldn't walk out on my business. My lawyer advised me to declare bankruptcy, but I wanted to see if Cafaro and I could work out a deal instead."

They did. Welu signed a note to pay back $40,000 over the next five years, plus accrued interest. He also took a new five-year lease (starting in October 1985) at $1,750 a month for the arcade; everything else was cancelled out. The settlement was good for both parties, Welu figured, because each got something out of it.

Things again were looking up for him. A combination of his wife getting a job and an upswing in business allowed him to pay off the debt in four years instead of five (not counting the monthly rent). In the spring of 1989, with approximately 18 months left on his lease, Welu received another piece of news from the Cafaro Corp.

"They told me they were going to build a new food court in the mall, and they wanted to put an arcade within it," he said. "I'm currently located in a side hallway, next to an outside entrance. I told them that I didn't want to go in the food court, and they said if I didn't that they'd get somebody else. The rent would be $85,000 a year, compared to the approximate $21,000 I'm paying now.

"They said the new food court would generate a lot of new business, in addition to a new department store being added," Welu continued. "I told them they were crazy. We had a great department store in '82. That was my best year, when I did $172,000; I can't do better than that. Even if I got to $200,000, the cost of my machines and the rent wouldn't allow me to make a profit. Basically, they said, 'Tough luck. If you don't take it, we'll give it to someone else.'"

The $85,000 was only the tip of the iceberg; there were other charges besides this basic rent. To wit, a "common area mall maintenance fee" of $4.25 per square foot, which would've cost $6,000 or $7,000; a pro-rated share of real estate taxes ($1,000); a pro-rated share of insurance costs ($1,000); a marketing fund ($750); "overage," which is the amount a tenant has to pay over an established gross amount of revenue (for Welu, it was 15 percent of any figure exceeding $250,000); a $10,000 "start up" fee; and—the biggest cost of all—having to build a new room to house the arcade, which Welu conservatively estimated at $70,000. "Now you know why I turned them down," he laughed.

The Cafaro Corp. offered the lease to Bally's Aladdin's Castle for $80,000 a month in rent. They are due to open in March or April. Figuring that he couldn't compete with the chain, Welu says he wrote the mall developers a letter asking them to 1) release him from the court judgement, since he had paid off the $40,000 agreement note, and 2) to be released from the remainder of his lease—six to seven months—after BAC opens.

A young mother tries to win a plush toy for her toddler at the triple crane in Challenges.

"Malls let you operate larger games, which earn more money and justify their size and cost."

"They wrote me back and said they refused to do either one," Welu said. "I was expected to stay and compete with them to the best of my abilities. My lawyer tells me that they are legally obligated to release me from the judgment, but they are fighting it tooth and nail. I would expect to win that issue in court, but as far as me having to remain in the mall, I'll stay if I legally have to. If not, I'm out of here. They know I'd lose money if I'm forced to stay, but it doesn't matter to them.

"Tony Cafaro sat across a desk from me and my wife and told me, point blank, that they would much rather do business with a large corporation than a local operator. Arcades in enclosed malls are being dominated by three or four large chains. I think I'm one of the few local operators still operating in a mall, based on my visits to other malls around the country. An advantage that the chains have over us small operators is that they can make package deals. For instance, Aladdin's Castle will take a mall location knowing that it'll lose money or barely break even. But when that developer builds a big mall in two other cities, Aladdin's Castle gets those, too. A local operator can't counteract that."

Welu has been embroiled in an off-and-on dispute with the Cafaro Corp. for close to 10 years. He's fought for what he believes is right, winning some battles, losing others. Sadly, he says, the time has come to call it a career.

"At this point, I think I'm out of the games business," Welu concluded. "It's time to look for employment elsewhere. It's been great to me for 16 years, and the people have basically been wonderful, but I'm done. Sure, Cafaro's found somebody else to pay them more money, so why take less from me? But what about the human element? I've been a good tenant for 16 years, and this is what I have to show for it."

A developer's perspective

The commonly held perception, then, is that mall developers don't want local operators for mall tenants. Is it a fair assessment? We asked Ben Viloski, director of real estate for the Cafaro Corp.

"In the past, we had more local operators running our mall arcades, but things have changed," he said. "With the large malls of today and their high-tech design, the small local operator often can't provide what's necessary to survive. So we end up dealing with a chain like Bally's

Aladdin's Castle or a large operator with the requisite resources.

"New mall arcades require a lot of square footage, and the ones holding those leases have to provide both an entertainment and social function," Viloski continued. "The local operator usually can't afford to build the room or update the arcade's features. He has a problem with flexibility and the ability to generate the business required to operate in a new mall. Chains like Sega's Time-Out and Bally's Aladdin's Castle can pay more rent and do more volume, so we consider this ability to perform and their financial statements. Of course, there are exceptions to every rule. We have negotiated with local operators."

What about the Cafaro Corp.'s decision to bring Bally's Aladdin's Castle into Welu's mall?

"We did offer that space to Mr. Welu first, but he wasn't willing to come up with anything in negotiations," Viloski said. "We were going to put him in a front-and-center location, right in the middle of a new food court. But he wouldn't accept the higher standards we required—the cost of building a new room and the higher rent. In the long run, I don't think Mr. Welu could envision the profitability that would've come from it."

A willingness to take on space

Of course, being in a shopping mall location doesn't automatically translate into an adversarial relationship between local operator and developer. Welu said that despite his difficulties, he'd advise other operators to grab a shopping mall location rather than a strip mall or free-standing arcade. (Though again, he feels the opportunities for such locations are scant.)

One operator who's experienced good fortune in shopping malls is Alan Bruck, co-owner of Recreational Concepts Inc. in Huntingdon Valley, Pa. The three-year-old company operates 10 shopping mall arcades across the country under the banner of Challenges Arcades.

Bruck's partner once operated a chain of 40 arcades, so he quite naturally fostered countless real estate contacts. This has proven crucial to the young company getting its foot in the door, so to speak. Bruck was a distributor before becoming an operator, so both men have plenty of coin-op experience and acumen for playing in the big leagues.

"A negative for the small operator is that he's suddenly putting all of his eggs in one basket."

"When a landlord is looking for a tenant, he wants to see a strong financial position, one that can withstand the peaks and valleys of business," he said. "An operator who takes a lease in a shopping mall today has to offer a lot of space, and that's dictated in part by the role assumed by redemption. A 1,500-square-foot arcade used to be a good size, but to add the dimension of redemption, you need much more room. On the video end, there are more simulator games and multi-player games out there. That alone puts stress on a place; it makes expansion necessary."

Bruck says that although his company is not large, given the right circumstances, it is not reticent to take on more space. Two of the existing arcades were recently expanded, one by 50 percent, the other by 100 percent.

"We look for these opportunities if the space is available, if it's a good mall, and if the economic conditions are such that it all made sense," he said. "Another thing that's relevant to this is making an impact on the customer. Look at a retail business like Blockbuster Video; what makes it so good is the size and selection. In our business, a customer would rather go into a 3,000-square-foot arcade than one half the size, because there are more games to play, more options. You have to make an impact on people. That's why developers go more and more with arcade chains, because they have the resources to deliver this."

Even if an operator has the necessary finances to negotiate a lease, he should keep in mind the commitment that's required, Bruck warns.

"A negative for the small operator is that he's suddenly putting all of his eggs in one basket," Bruck said. "When you sign that lease, you'd better be prepared to pay the rent. In other words, there is a chance being taken. This business has always offered very moveable equipment. You go into someone else's establishment with your machines; if they don't perform well there, you take them out and put them somewhere else. You lose that flexibility by thinking of permanent situations like lease-holds."

Conclusion

What's the moral of the story for small, local operators? It would have to be something like this: shopping mall locations are a hot, fiercely-fought-for commodity. If you are financially secure enough to negotiate for a lease, then lucky enough to land it, congratulations. But be aware of the big commitment you're expected to make. □

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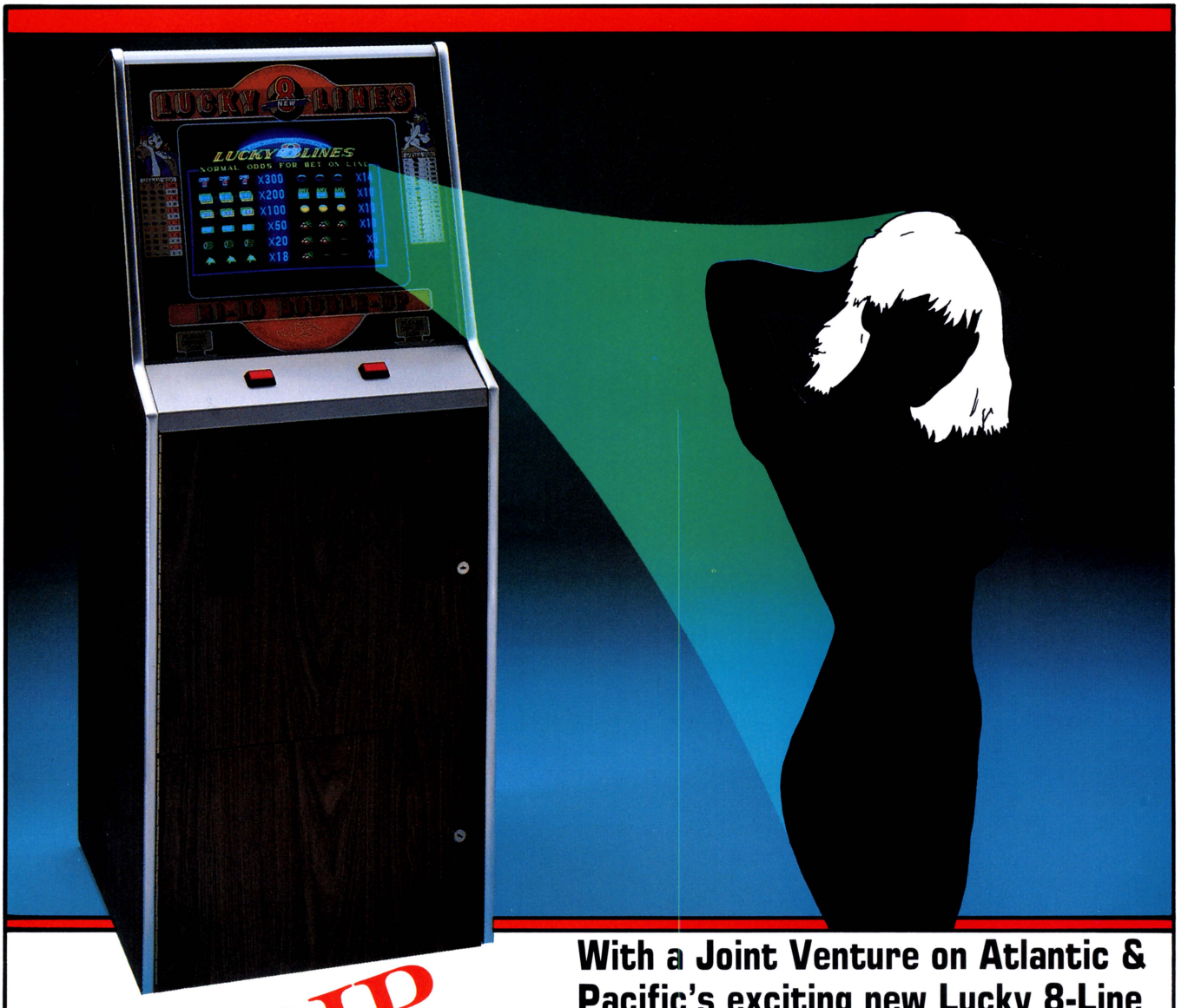

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Christopher Caire

Can "mom-and-pop" operations continue to survive?

The classic, age-old matchup of David vs. Goliath surrounds us daily: Joe's Pizza Parlor vs. Pizza Hut, Johnson's Grocery vs. Winn-Dixie, Randolph's Video Emporium vs. Blockbuster Video, Maple Street Bookstore vs. B. Dalton, and on down the line. For whatever reason—product uniqueness, convenience, friendly service, prices, etc.—the little guy is somehow able to compete against a more voluminous adversary.

For years, the coin-op industry had a clearly defined tier system: manufacturer, distributor, and operator. Each level "did its own thing," so to speak; the lines of demarcation were drawn. Over time, the borders began to erode. It became more commonplace to see the functions of one level being assumed by another.

At one time, the only Goliath a small operator had to deal with was a larger operator. Then came the added competition of distributor/operators. But lately, operating Davids have come to fear an even more powerful hybrid: the manufacturer/operator. The rumblings have come from across the country, and the message seems to be this: "We're angry, but more than that, we're afraid that these manufacturers are going to put us out of business."

To illustrate this phenomenon, we chose to focus on one manufacturer—Atari Games—and their operating subsidiary, known as Atari Operations. We also spoke to two operators who have felt their presence; one didn't mind being identified, but the other chose to remain anonymous. Atari Games, obviously, isn't the only operating manufacturer. We limited the scope of the story to simply give a case-in-point, not to mention the nod to brevity.

"Operator Tom"

Our first operator—we'll call him Tom—has been in a strip mall location since 1981. He operates 50 or 60 games and characterizes himself as a survivor who's hung on through the bad times and made it.

After Atari Operations first moved in, Tom says his earnings dropped 30 percent. He responded by spending double his usual budget on new games and advertising. His gross is now about the same, but the net is way down.

"They've sure taken the profitability out of operating," Tom said. "I don't know if they'll put me under or not, but right now I'm just hanging on. I have a *Hard Drivin'*, but that's a good piece that everybody has to have. I've been forced to really pick and choose carefully, because I can't put in as many games as they do. I certainly can't match them piece for piece.

"We are always conscious that if we do not open in that (mall) location, someone else almost certainly will."

"Atari Operations moved into my city in May 1989," Tom said. "They opened two arcades, one of them in an enclosed mall directly across the street from me. Beforehand, Atari Games was testing games with me, and I found out that Atari Operations had access to all of the data I'd given them for years. They knew what my location gross was and how it had improved over the years. Suddenly, Atari Operations decided they wanted to move in right by me."

Tom explained that Atari Operations leased "a pretty big chunk of space" and installed a phalanx of new games. "In addition to having all of the latest games, they put in Namco's *Winning Run*, a $15,000 piece. I certainly can't go out and buy one of those and a few *Hard Drivin'* machines."

"Why does a big corporation want to set up right across the street from me?" he continued. "There are a lot of places in this city where Atari Operations could've gone. If they were sticking by their stated principles of not wanting to put the small arcade operator out of business, they would've found a location just as good but a mile or two away. Not only do they alter the three-leveled balance within the industry, but they have the advantage of picking up pieces from their other arcades and test pieces from Atari Games Corp. When Atari Operations kits a game, I notice the cabinets used are the same ones

that the test pieces come out in. So they aren't really two separate corporations to me, because they use each other's resources. I don't think there's a difference."

Tom says that for a few months before opening, Atari Operations officially denied that they were moving across the street from him. It wasn't until he checked with the City Planning Commission and saw the plans drawn up, as well as hearing from regular customers that Atari Operations had placed newspaper ads for employees, that he knew otherwise.

"When they did talk with me, they said they didn't expect to compete with me directly because they were going more with redemption games," Tom said. "That is true; they are heavily into redemption, whereas I only have a few redemption pieces. But they are also heavily into all of the latest videos and pins, and they update them as often as possible. Atari has a list of my top 10 games in their office. They came in and videotaped my place after they opened up, which tells me that they want to compete head-to-head. And a small operator simply can't do that with a big corporation."

But doesn't Atari Operations have the right to compete in the free market system, allowing the marketplace to decide which arcade should survive?

"Sure, they certainly have every right to put me out of business," Tom said. "In early 1988, Atari tried to get a lease in a northern California shopping mall but couldn't get the necessary city permits. They've written letters to yours and other trade magazines, claiming that they aren't trying to put mom-and-pops out of business. But that's what they are actually doing. If they see a good location and think they can make a buck, they have no problems going in and putting someone out of business.

"More and more distributors and manufacturers are taking over operating," he continued. "It's not just Atari. Sega, Data East, Betson, C.A. Robinson, and others have big game rooms and get the big, lucrative contracts. The big chunks of operating are moving toward the people with all of the money and resources. When you combine that with the really large operators, some of whom have as many as 10,000 games, you have a situation where the small operator will eventually be squeezed out. I don't think there's anything I can do to keep a company with more capital from wiping me out. They make no bones about doing it on a case-by-case basis."

Marlene Suttles

Since 1981, Marlene Suttles has operated a single arcade in California—the San Rafael Family Entertainment Center. Her first choice for a location was within a mall, but it wasn't to be.

"Arcades had a terrible name, and the uproar forced us into an area with a lot of

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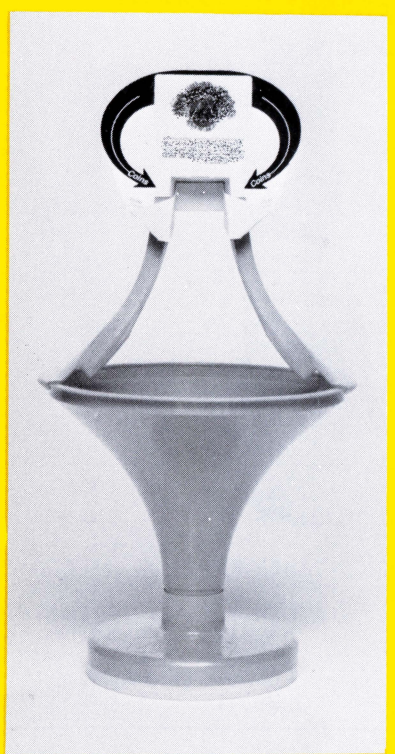

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restrictions,'' Suttles explained. ''At first it was the industry's bad reputation. Then the problem was developers wanting only the big corporations, people that can bring in lots of new games. Mom-and-pop businesses are being pushed aside by this corporate attitude.''

Feeling the time was right to expand, Suttles' company again tried to hunt down a mall location. When the opportunity to move into a new mall arose in late 1987, she says, their efforts were thwarted by Atari.

''We had built up a good reputation in the county; the people knew we didn't operate a drug den in our arcade,'' Suttles said. ''Unbeknownst to us, Atari had been negotiating a lease with the real estate people for the same spot. They signed a lease two days before our proposal. It turned out that they didn't get the space, because Atari couldn't get through the city council.

''I was bitter with Atari because of all the 'rah-rah' speeches, how we (operators) should all stick together through the crash,'' she continued. ''Well, I did stick by them. I bought their systems games and counted on their promise of getting kits at a reasonable price. Then the minute they started getting successful pieces, Atari set their eyes on expansion and didn't put anything into the systems. All of these successful pieces were put out as dedicated games again. I was really ticked-off.''

The San Rafael Family Entertainment Center is presently competing with other arcades of comparable size and a Bally's Aladdin's Castle in another part of the city. A new shopping center is opening soon, and Suttles is worried about who might turn up there.

''It's scary; I could end up with Atari or another manufacturer-owned arcade in my backyard,'' she said. ''They send representatives to the mall conventions, so they know where the new ones are to be built before anyone else. If this new mall has one of the big guys in there, it'll kill me, because it's only a half-mile away. It's hard enough competing with Aladdin's Castle, because they entice families with things like five to eight tokens for a dollar.

''I accept competition, but let's all be on the same footing for game pricing.''

(Note: Atari Games' Mary Fujihara wrote a letter to Play Meter after this issue first surfaced. Regarding the allegations made by Suttles, she said, ''No one representing Atari had any knowledge whatsoever of any other operators who were negotiating for the same lease.'')

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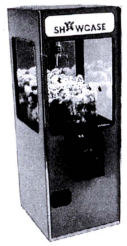

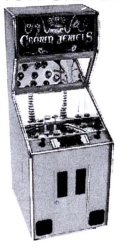

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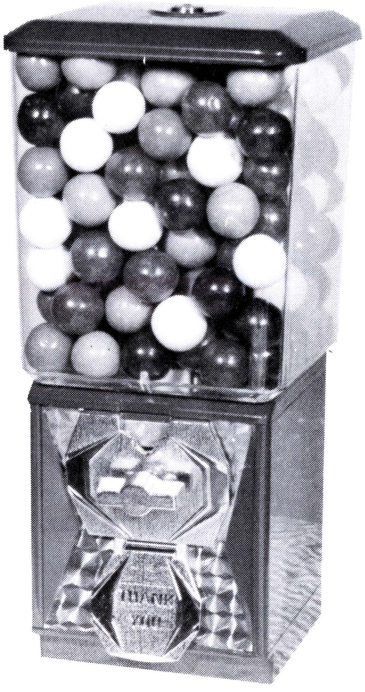

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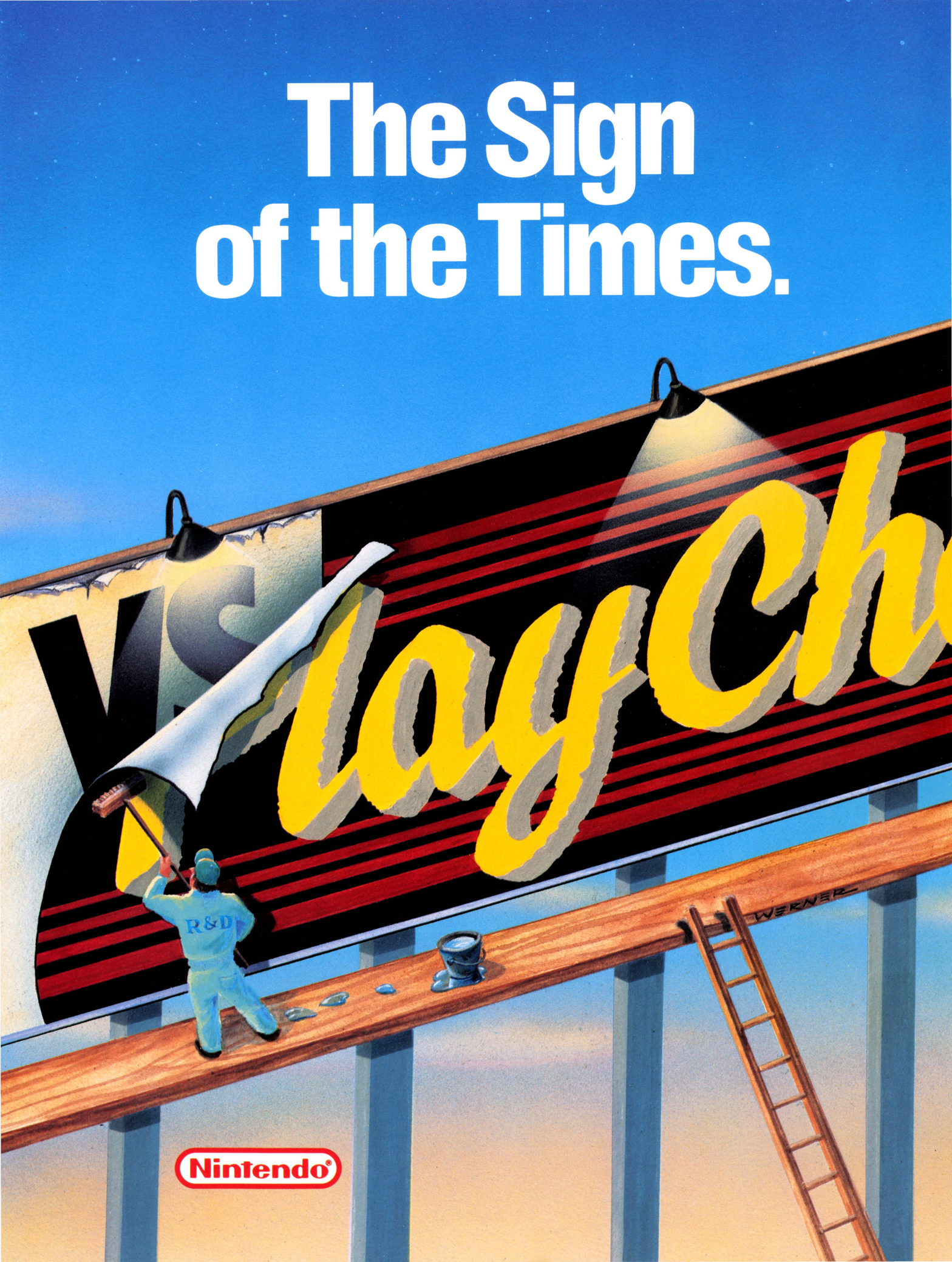
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I accept competition, but let's all be on the same footing for game pricing."

The question, though, is raised again: why should Atari or any other manufacturer be denied the opportunity to operate arcades if the venture proves profitable?

"They have the right to do it, but when manufacturers start becoming distributors and operators, we're in trouble," Suttles said. "Let's put it this way: if Levi Strauss decided to open up their own stores and cut out the middle people, it would hurt Macy's and other retail outlets.

"Myself and a lot of other operators who have to deal with manufacturer-operators feel betrayed. I talked with a lot of operators at the most recent ACME show who had the same problem, including street route operators. Since they manufacture the games, the manufacturer-operated arcades get the latest games a lot cheaper than regular operators."

Suttles, like Operator Tom, sees little hope for the small-time operator in the coming years.

"I think this signals the demise of mom-and-pop operations, not just for coin-op arcades, but other small businesses as well," she concluded. "There isn't much to do to combat big money and a name with clout. It's sad what the big corporations are doing. I always thought the little guys with the little businesses formed the roots of American life, but that isn't the case any longer."

Despite these feelings, Suttles concedes that "Atari puts a lot of time and money into their research and development, and they have come out with some good pieces lately." She does continue to purchase Atari equipment, though not as much as in the past.

Atari responds

According to Kevin Hayes, executive vice president for Atari Operations, the bulk of the company's 32 arcades are located in the Southeast (the main office is in Savannah, Ga.). Expansion efforts have been concentrated in this region and the western United States.

"We have been operating in shopping malls for over 12 years, originally as Barrel of Fun and more recently as Atari Expo," he explained. "We have long-established relationships with national mall developers. When they come to us and ask us to look at opening an amusement arcade in one of their malls, we give it due consideration. We are always conscious that if we do not open in that location, someone else almost certainly will.

"Here in Silicon Valley, home of the video game, arcade restrictions are among the most severe in the United States," Hayes continued. "New arcade openings are limited to major shopping malls. Where we have an opportunity to locate in such places, our policy is to do so—provided the economics are right. In one case (in 1989), we opened a new arcade despite the best efforts of a local amusement center owner, who even resorted to speaking against us at a city conditional-use permit hearing!

"We had assured this gentleman that he had nothing to fear from us in this case for two reasons. First, we operate a heavily redemption-oriented arcade; our customer base would be much younger than his. Second, we planned to do our standard deal of four tokens for a dollar, while he offered six for a dollar."

Contrary to causing harm, Hayes believes Atari Operations has been a *positive* force for coin-op.

"In the end, we have been vindicated," he said. "This same gentleman has admitted that his revenues have not decreased, despite going to frequent 12 token/$1 deals and instances of two games for one token where we have two-, three-, and even four-token games. Our view is that we have increased the market for games in that area by offering something different to what was there already. Surely, the whole industry gains by this." □

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Question:

Why is it to an operator's advantage, in your opinion, to have an arcade located within an enclosed shopping mall, as opposed to a free-standing arcade?

A **Les Jacobs**
Just For Fun
Chicago, Ill.

Enclosed malls have, by far, more traffic volume than outside strip centers; we have arcades in both. Shopping in an enclosed mall is more of a recreational event for families. It's almost like a day at the beach. A family can eat at one of the mall restaurants, stroll around and do some shopping, go to the movies, and come to our arcade to play the games. We try to locate our shopping mall arcades near a theater to get that captive audience.

We've found that our arcades located within outside strip centers have the traffic contained to the immediate area. If the weather is bad—too hot, rainy—our customers might be inclined to stay home. You don't have that problem with enclosed malls. Plus, as I said, an enclosed mall has a mix conducive to bringing the whole family. The mother can shop, while dad and the kids can stroll around and hopefully end up in our game room.

A **Larry Salganek**
New Mexico Vending
Santa Fe, N.M.

Arcades in mall locations appeal to a wide range of age groups. They're what I call "natural" game rooms, because the arcades are in a place where people are already present. A good mall location might be near tourist attractions, restaurants, and other natural money-makers. These arcades are usually family-oriented, and the redemption equipment in them is profitable.

The rents are high in mall locations, but it's still better than operating "unnatural" game rooms. These arcades are usually losers. They depend on teenage customers actually going to the location, as opposed to the customer already being there with a mall arrangement. Unnatural game rooms also have a small number of new customers and little foot traffic.

A **Rodney Murphy**
Diamond Jim's
Columbus, Ga.

I think the biggest advantage comes during the slow times. We have a distinct edge over strip mall arcades and free-standing arcades when the slow season hits. People don't necessarily come to the mall to visit us, but while they're here they will spend $1 or $2 to kill time. Arcades that aren't in enclosed malls have to market themselves to get customers to come.

Another advantage is the weather. To us, good weather means rainy weather. During inclement weather, the kids and even the adults want to get out of the house because there's nothing to do. Often they'll come in and play some games. Also, malls have become a popular "meet" spot for kids to hang out. If they congregate outdoors, say in a parking lot, the police tend to run them off. But if they do the same thing within a mall, the mall security doesn't bother them.

A **Tim O'Reilly**
Alouette Amusement Canada
Quebec, Canada

We believe that operating in shopping centers gives long-term stability and the availability of competitive financing. Leasing companies and banks will finance equipment at a more competitive rate when the goods are not moved, as they are with street locations. Also, real depreciation of the games is less for an arcade than street locations, since they aren't moved as much and are better maintained. Thus, there is less wear and tear.

Shopping centers provide the operator with a forum that allows him to attract customers whose demographics are very different than that of a street location. The demographics of many of our amusement centers in malls consist of 60 percent family members and 40 percent young adults. In addition, the control and atmosphere created in a mall is, in many instances, much more positive than that of a street location. We do not permit eating or smoking in our mall stores; enforcing these standards on the street arcades is harder.

Another advantage is the resale value of a mall location. The ability to sell a store is much greater than a street location. A downfall of the mall location is the rents becoming increasingly higher. If we cannot adjust the pricing of our games, the industry may find itself outpriced as the rents continue to increase.

In summary, a mall arcade provides the operator with stability, a long-term investment, minimal management time, built-in mall security, and greater community recognition. □

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Friday, March 9

8:00-11:00 am
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Speaker: Charles Ross

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Speaker: H. Richard Priesmeyer, PhD.

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Guests started arriving for the event on the evening of Nov. 15, when a reception and buffet dinner allowed friendly interaction and discussion of everyone's favorite subject: the importance of the jukebox in the world of coin-op.

Starting out early on a snow-covered day, guests first traveled to the manufacturing facility for a well-detailed tour of every department and a close-up view of the assembly lines.

The guided tour

Rowe's Ron Friday, Steve Price, and Ed Gundrum took small groups through all the major steps in equipment assemblage. Gundrum, materials manager, explained that "quality is a major issue in today's marketplace and we build quality in."

Of particular note are the large number of long-term employees, ranging anywhere from four years up to 42 years of service, and the pride they all take in producing quality products. The Grand Rapids office includes 348 employees. All were warmly hospitable and patient in explaining the fine points of their jobs.

Engineer Joe Krestakos, a 43-year veteran, with the 1946 AMI *Model A*.

The assembly area for the *LaserStar CD 100* includes five assembly stations where components are added in various stages. There is a separate assembly area designated for CD hideaway units and wall boxes, which represent 50 percent of the CD market in the United Kingdom where space is at a premium in local pubs.

The wiring harness department occupies a large part of the factory and is loaded with boards for all the different Rowe jukebox models, bill changers and acceptors.

Jukebox cabinets are produced locally, from Rowe designs, by a company known for its fine furniture. Rowe also designs and constructs most of its test equipment.

When the jukeboxes reach their final stop on the line, each unit is checked at high voltage to assure that it is absolutely safe. According to Robin Daning, department steward on the CD line, "We don't send any jukeboxes out that aren't the best in the world." That's the kind of enthusiasm and strong work ethic that permeates the entire Rowe plant.

Production for both CD and vinyl units are separate, but the functions are the same on each side. Bill changers and bill acceptors are also produced at this facility, which also includes a service and parts area and a finished goods warehouse.

Noted Gundrum, "We are judicious about saving door frames and other materials that may be requested in the future. Our jukeboxes last a long time and there are many of them out there."

Adjacent to the manufacturing plant is a machinery/tooling shop where many component parts are produced in-house. Rowe purchases sheet metal already cut in various sizes for use in producing rejecter brackets, mounting brackets, and many other parts. Any remaining scrap metal is recycled. "Labor intensive" is the best description for this segment of the Rowe factory.

A trip down memory lane

Upstairs, above the machinery/tooling shop, is the site of the original assembly line and the Rowe Jukebox Museum, a

treat for both the eyes and ears. Nostalgia lines the walls and center aisle in the form of several generations of jukeboxes, culminating in the company's finest achievement in the new age of jukebox technology—the *LaserStar CD 100*.

The 1934 *Model F* featured such songs as "Sleepy Time Gal," "My Blue Heaven," and "Missouri Waltz." Across the room, the 1957 *Model H* offered "Earth Angel," "The Great Pretender," and "That'll Be The Day."

The 1960 *Lyric* listed "There's A Moon Out Tonight," "Steady Kind," and "Hokey Pokey." The 1961 *Continental II* brought back memories with "Mack the Knife," "Searchin'," and "At The Hop." The 1989 *LaserStar CD 100* featured selections from groups like New Kids on the Block and Alabama, plus popular single artist albums by Linda Ronstadt, Lee Greenwood, and Paula Abdul.

One of the most interesting staff members at Rowe in Grand Rapids is Joe Krestakos, a 43-year company veteran who has seen it all, for him starting with the 1946 *AMI Model A*. Joe worked on the assembly line for this classic jukebox, which is highly-regarded for its design and affectionately referred to as "the mother of plastic."

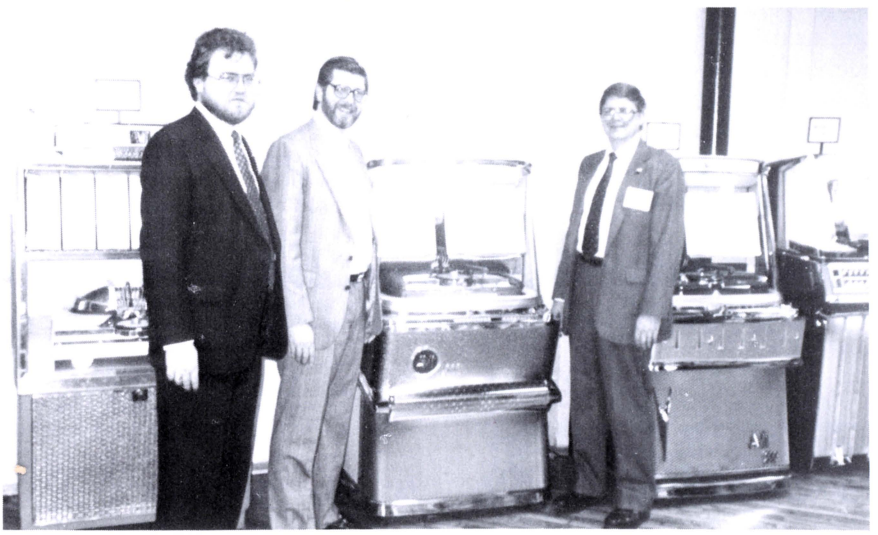
Joe remembers the *Model A* being shipped in wooden crates and loaded onto boxcars that came right up to the back door of the manufacturing plant.

Although he has a soft spot for that model, his favorites are the Rowe/AMI jukeboxes of the '50s, an era when chrome reigned king on automobiles as well as jukeboxes. The mechanism was still an attraction at this time, and prominently displayed.

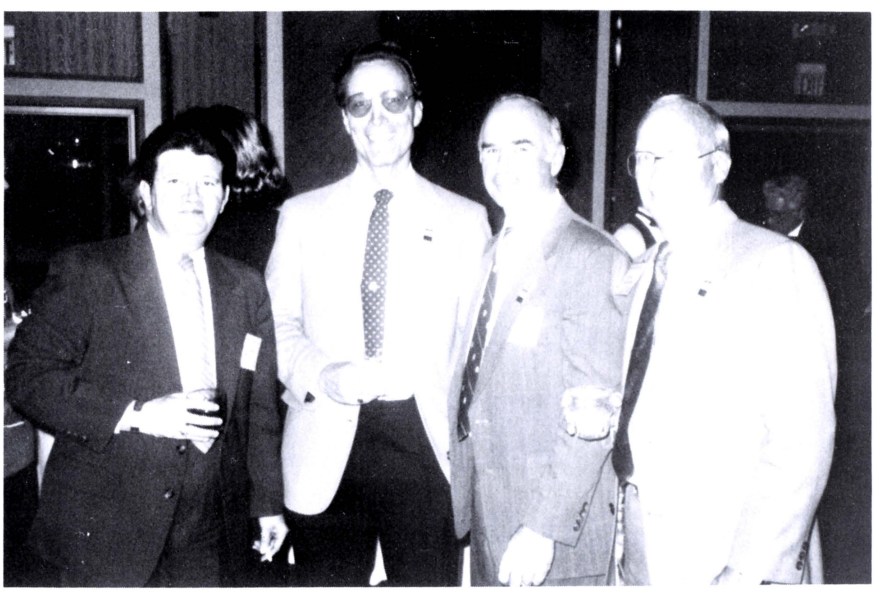
"By the middle '60s," said Joe, "the mechanism was no longer a big draw. More room was needed for title display, which became so large it was impractical to show the mechanism along with up to 200 titles! The titles won out.

"Now we have the best of two worlds in our *CD Combo*, which allows an operator to enter the CD arena and not lose his vinyl." What does Joe see for the future? "Dedicated CD units will take over the entire market."

State Rep. Richard A. Bandstra (l) of the 93rd District presents a special certificate to Rowe. Accepting is Robert Courts. To his left are Ed Gundrum, Ron Friday, Gale Traywick, and Ollie Okkonen.



From left: Rowe's Ron Gorlewski, Bill Kemp, and Larry Palma by jukeboxes from the '50s.

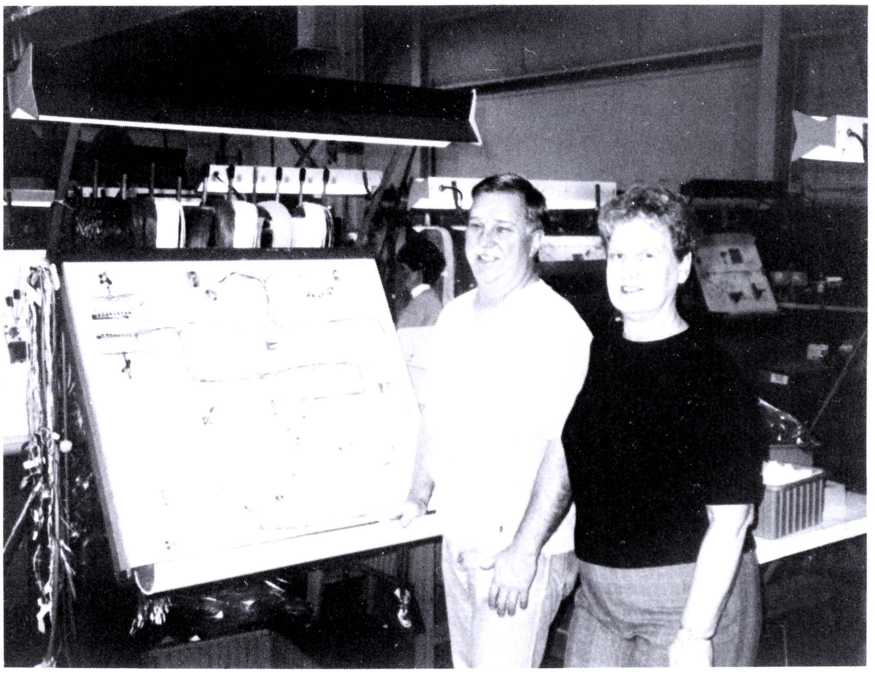


At the evening reception, (l-r): John Schumacher of AMOA, John Bell of Bell's Music Co., Clyde Knupp of Amuse-O-Matic Co., and Robert Courts of Rowe.

The day's finale was the presentation of a special certificate from the state of Michigan to the entire corporation, Rowe/AMI, commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Jukebox. State Rep. Richard A. Bandstra presented the certificate to Robert Courts, vice president of manufacturing in Grand Rapids.

"Quality is a major issue in today's market and we build quality in."

Three of AMOA's first ladies (Shirley Kerner, Diane Knupp, and Tami Norberg-Paulsen) blew out the candles on a jukebox cake following a light buffet lunch enjoyed right next to the museum. All guests received a Rowe *LaserStar CD 100* jukebox pin, a book outlining the history of Rowe/AMI jukeboxes, and a digital travel clock with the engraving: "In Honor of the 100th Anniversary of the Jukebox." □



Ellie Haynes, 26-year employee, and Howard Andrus, 36-year employee, at the *Hideaway* harness board.

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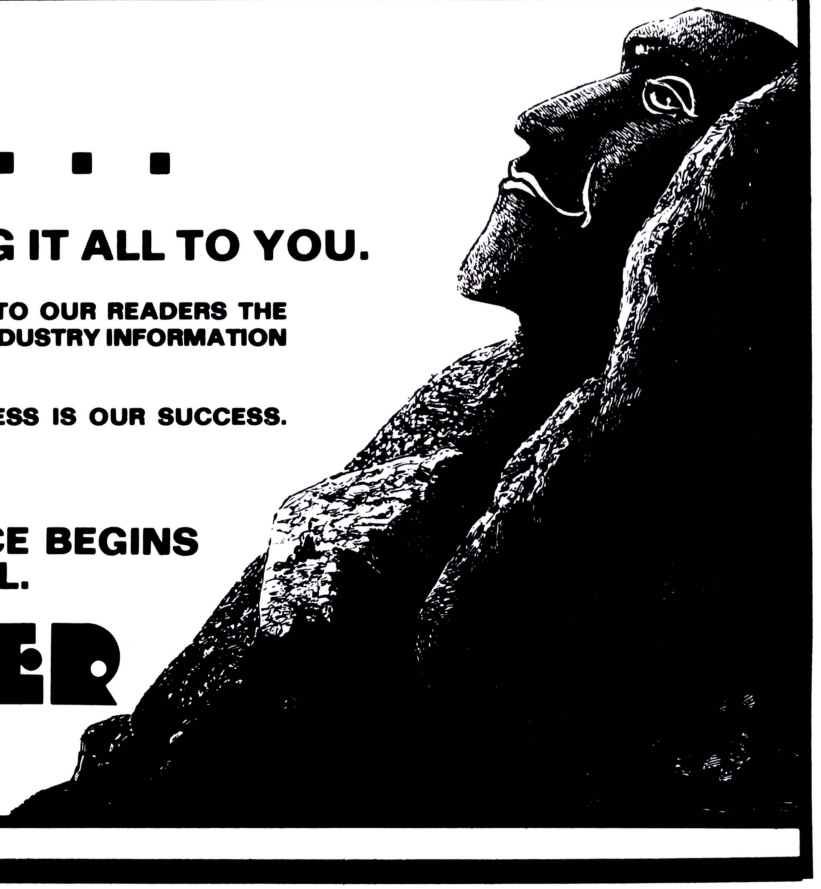
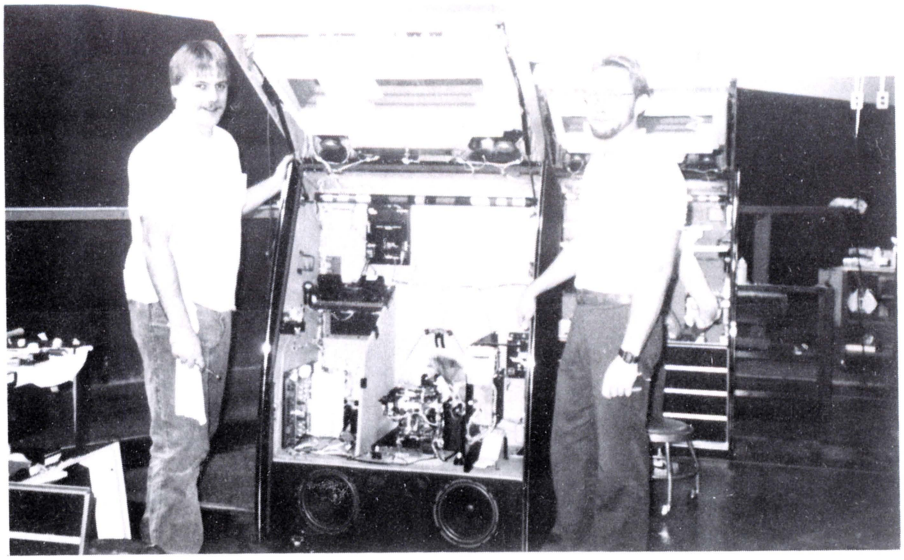
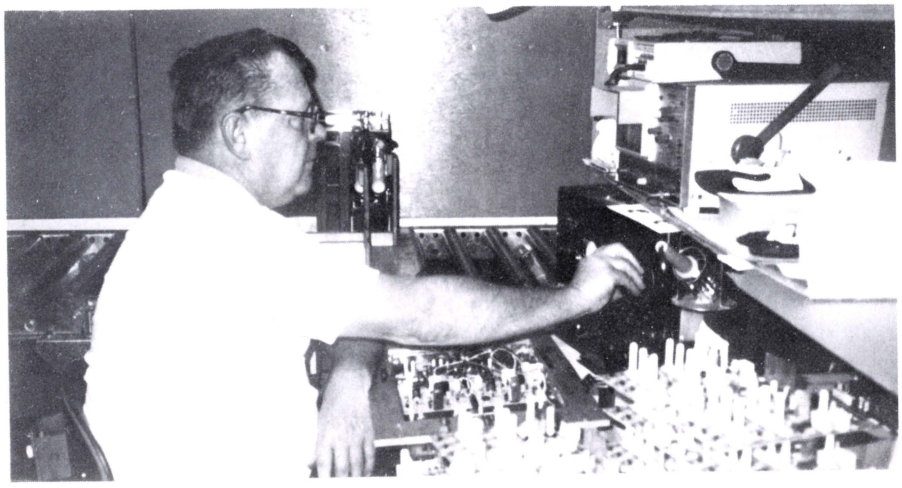


Jim Hayes of Gem Music Co., past chairman of the AMOA Jukebox Promotion Committee, and Tami Norberg-Paulsen of C&N Sales Co., new chairman.

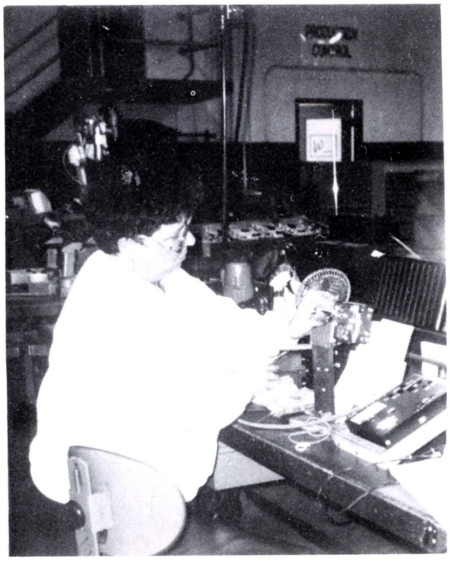


Gary Mol (l) and Robin Daning at the final checkpoint for the *CD 100*.

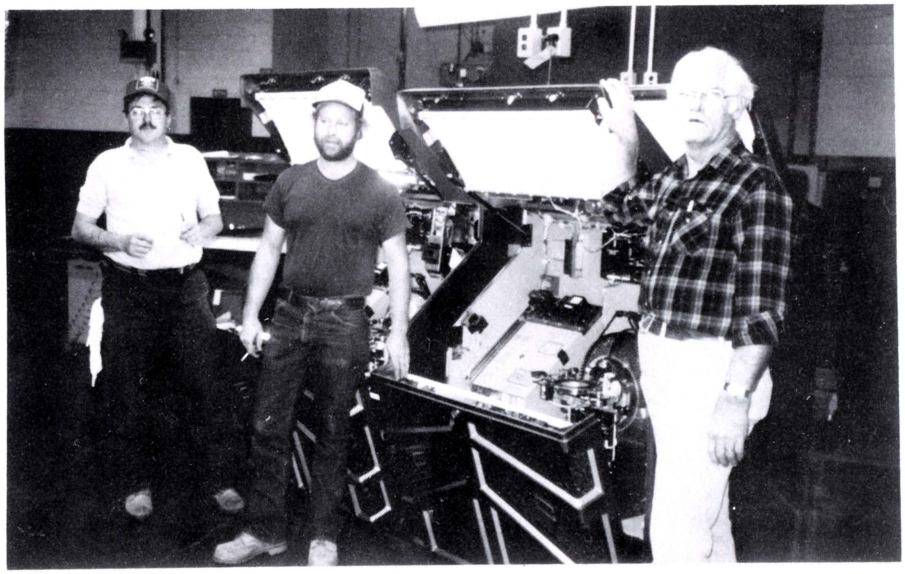


Jim Boynk busily assembles amplifiers.

Jerome Roys, department reworker, checks the CD mechanism.



Rose Ostrowski calibrates a bill changer.

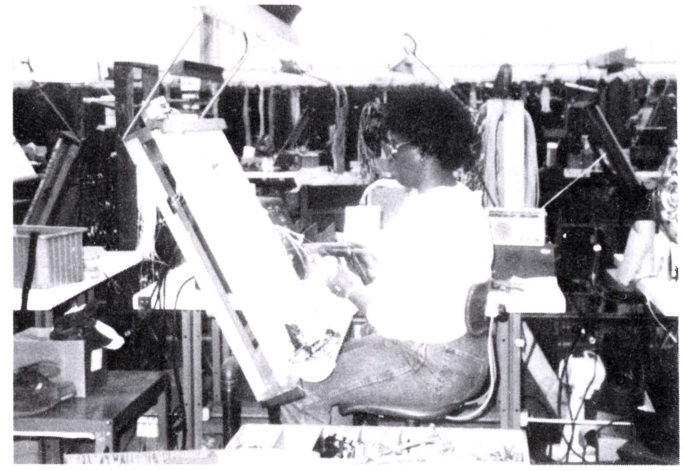


At the end of the assembly line for the *R-94*, (l-r): Stan Lusk, Doug Conger, and Bill Foster.

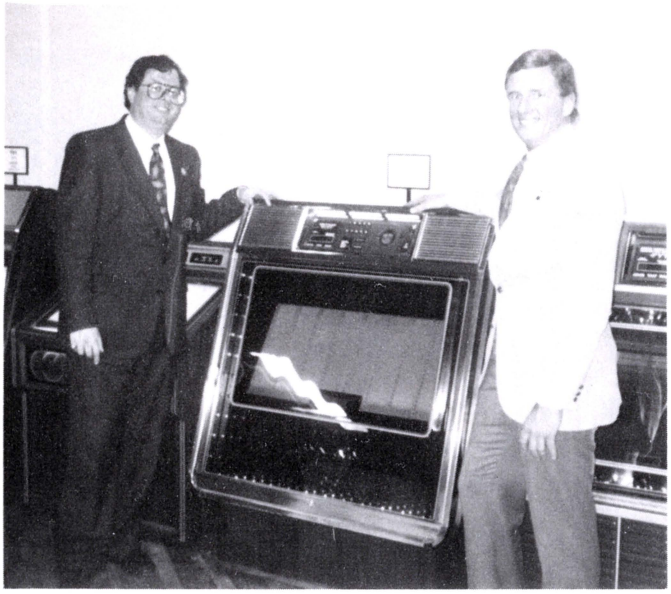
Marv De Groot works at one of five assembly stations for the *CD 100*.

Robert Courts (l) and Jerry Gordon by their favorite jukebox, the 1961 *Continental II*, the last model to display the mechanism.

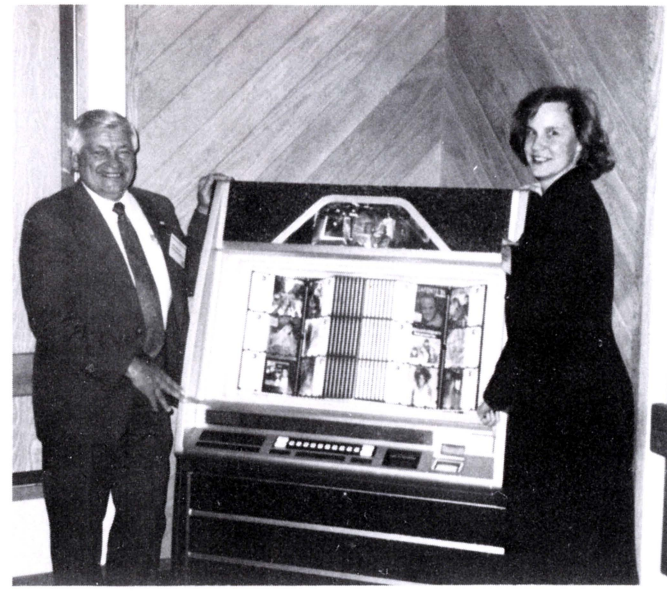
Joe Berridge assembles title racks for the *CD WallStar*.



Vicky Smith at a bill changer board in harness assembly.



Joel Friedman (l) and Jim Hayes by Joel's favorite jukebox, the 1980 *R-85 Starlight*.



Ollie Okkonen and Gale Traywick with the *LaserStar CD 100*.

Joel Friedman (l) of Rowe with Arnold Greenhut of Merrill Lynch.

Gilbert Rodriguez, line builder, at the music assembly stage.

Tami Norberg Paulsen, Shirley Kerner, and Diane Knupp blow out the candles on a jukebox cake.

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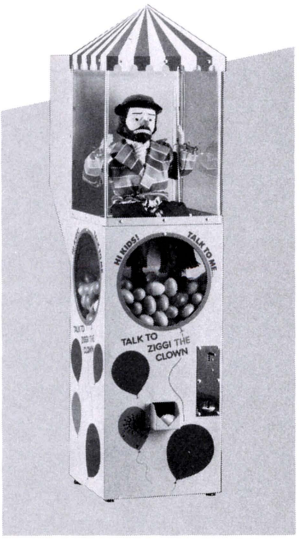

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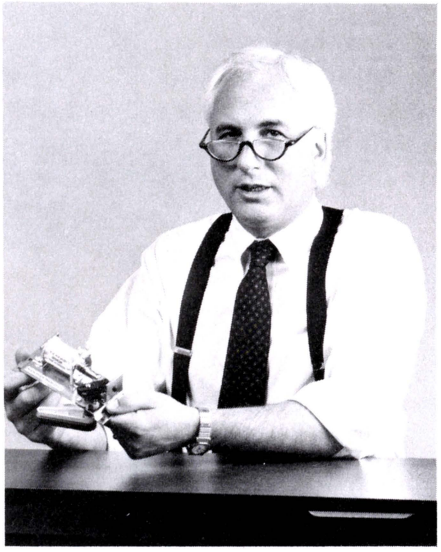


Stern holding the new solid-state flipper design.

Two legendary figures, Sam Stern and Harry Williams, are synonymous with the early days of pinball. Both are credited with many innovations in the pinball machine. Sam's son Gary is now the executive vice president of Data East Pinball, a company that was started from the bare walls, as Gary explains. Gary's dad owned Williams Electronics from 1947 to 1964, when it was sold to Seeburg. Sam remained as president until 1976.

Gary grew up around the factory. He started working there during the summer when he was just 16 years old. Gary says his dad started him in the stock room, explaining that material control is where you make it or lose it in the pinball machine business because the margins are very small. If you don't have the parts or end up with too many, then you have a problem, he added.

Gary worked many summers for his father, before and during his college years. He graduated from Tulane University in New Orleans with a business degree in accounting. He then went on to get a law degree from Northwestern University, passed the Illinois Bar Exam in 1971, and practiced law for several years.

But the industry beckoned him back in 1973; he joined Williams as his dad's assistant. His title was assistant to the president, or using Gary's translation, "the boss's son." He was responsible for the day-to-day operations, while Sam concentrated on long-range projects like converting to solid-state electronics. In 1976 Sam and Gary left Williams to start Stern Electronics by purchasing the assets of the defunct Chicago Dynamics Industries (Chicago Coin). They fashioned a good pinball business, building up to 170 machines a day. Stern expanded into video games during the video boom.

Stern Electronics closed its doors when the game business took the plunge in the early '80s. Gary moved on to other endeavors, but pinball would call again a short time later.

When the pinball bug bit, Gary decided to put together a business plan for a pinball company, which Data East liked. Gary was impressed with Data East, and a deal was struck to open Data East Pinball (it's wholly-owned by Data East). Of course,

it is based in the pinball capital of the world, the Chicago area.

You said the company was started from bare walls. Could you explain?

In late 1986 we went into some temporary space. We started out without even a blueprint for our single drawing. We had to do everything, including documenting everything and designing games. We moved into an empty factory in May 1987. We had to build the factory from scratch. Obviously, I'd been involved with Williams, which was walking into a very well organized company. I was at Stern, and we took over the existing CDI factory. But this was starting with bare walls. My plant manager and I built the stock room ourselves!

Looking back over the last three years, would you say that things have gone as planned?

Some have and some haven't. Of course, no one has started a pinball company from scratch since Williams in the early '40s. Bally and Premier go back to the '30s. We realize that that makes us the new kids on the block. We tried something that most people wouldn't have tried and we are doing it very successfully. Yes, there have been more difficulties than one would have anticipated. And yes, there have been some successes that one couldn't have predicted.

Do you have some examples of each?

The games today are much more complicated, and there's more going into them than there was many years ago. There are more parts and more features, and that certainly took more work. It was tougher building a factory from bare walls than anyone anticipated. We had to do extensive training. Now we've had many games that I am proud of. We have some very good people manufacturing our product. We emphasize our quality control circles, also. This we learned from our grandparent company, Data East Corp. in Japan.

Successes? I think our games speak for themselves. We just finished *Monday Night Football*, which was a lot of fun to do with ABC. It speaks for itself. *RoboCop* will also be excellent.

Is it true that you need three successful games before you can truly count yourself successful?

We've definitely had successes. As far as what you need and don't need, all of the old rules—whether it be how a game should play or how the market is—don't necessarily apply anymore. The market and demographics change very quickly and will continue to change in the future as our younger generation of new players grows up. We've definitely shown that we are here to stay. In addition, we are doing some innovations that show our commitment to the business and show how technically advanced we can be.

"We are introducing the technological advance of the decade on pinball machines: the solid-state flipper."

Is the pinball industry different from the video game industry?

I would say they are different. To some extent even the marketing may be different. Our market is more street- oriented than the video game market. Therefore, we try to design games that are street-oriented. *Monday Night Football* is a good example. Not that we can't be good in arcades, too, but we try to figure out what we can do to earn the street operator money over a long period of time.

Another major difference is the complexity of design. We have 700 different parts in a pinball machine. If you count the quantities of each, there are thousands of parts in a machine. A video game is simpler to manufacture. Although the programming may be difficult, the assembly and the control of the material and quality control are less. I haven't been in the video game industry for awhile, but I feel that building a pinball machine is much more complex.

Of those 700 different parts, many must be unique to the particular machine. What kind of costs are involved in tooling up—just getting a game in production?

Probably about $400,000. Of course, that's not counting salaries of all the people that are working on the game. I'm just estimating costs I can identify. You are also talking about nine months to a year from design to production. Each part must be designed and blueprinted.

We are striving to get more of a lead on game designs. But not so many that they will be outdated. We are somewhat unusual in that we already have our next two games on the street for testing. What that does is let us tune the games and get a lot of play on them, so we can find any quality problems—whether in design or assembly.

How thoroughly do you test games before they are shipped out of the factory?

We test for about three months on location. We regularly go to locations and interview people there. Of course, in interviews sometimes you get a lot of what you want to hear. The games have a lot of computer statistics that tell us about various features and we can tune the game. And, the players vote by putting quarters in the cashbox. Or in today's world, which is very important, 50 cents per play in the cashbox. When we start production of a game, we play the first 50 in the factory for about four days to see what kind of problems we can find.

Do you actually have games go out on test that you never put into production?

It's certainly conceivable. We haven't had that situation up to this point. We have redesigned some so much that you might not recognize them. The name may remain the same.

We've been hearing about pinball having a resurgence, so to speak. Do you feel the pinball market is growing?

Yes, I think it will grow for a couple of reasons. First of all, we are finally thinking in terms of getting more money in the cashbox with 50-cent play and at the same time we are reducing the wear and tear on

the game. This is a big thing with a pinball machine because it is a mechanical device. The other factor is we had a 20-year baby boom after WWII, and many of us did not have our children early in life. Our generation had children somewhat later. We now are having a so-called "baby boom-boom."

We are having a lot of children just becoming teenagers, and that population will increase in 1992. Those teenagers will start to play our games, and as they get older they will begin playing our machines in other types of locations, not just the arcades that teenagers hang around in. Again, we are gearing our product to street operators, and we look to a growth of the playing base in street locations.

There's been a push for increasing the price per game. Can it work?

We should be pushing 50 cents for one credit, 75 cents for two credits, and $1 for three credits. All other countries have 60-cent play. We have been stuck with a lower cost for some time. In the past people have tried 50-cent or three-for-a-dollar play. That did not work as well as 50 cents, 75 cents, or a dollar. And the reason is that a dollar starts to be meaningful; a quarter isn't.

If you and I are playing, we know we're going to be putting in 50 cents, so another quarter is not the end of the world. Now the operator is getting play for 37-1/2 cents. Whereas, when we had to put in a dollar and got three credits and only wanted two, a dollar started to mean something to us; that was only play for 33-1/3 cents. I'd like to say we thought of this, but we didn't. However, we saw it being done very effectively and are sending out our games from the factory with factory settings of 50 cents, 75 cents, and a dollar. The operators who are leaving them that way are doing well.

Did you feel that during the video boom it wasn't so much the players abandoning the pinball machines, but rather that the operators were finding it much more profitable to operate video games?

That may be some of it. But I also think that at the end of the last pinball explosion and the beginning of the video boom there were a couple of other factors. First, the pinball machines became very complicated to understand. The rules became so complicated that it seemed like the programmers were designing the game to see how tricky they could be. Today, if you look at our games, they are very easy to understand. Even on our first games the rules were color-coded. You shot the red targets, blue targets, yellow targets, whatever. *Monday Night Football* is an easy game to understand. In that respect, our games are more geared to the players of today and less to what was being designed for the expert players at the end of the last pinball explosion.

"My father said that he would rather make a good game that works than a great game that doesn't."

The other factor is that video was very exciting at that time. We all thought we were on the edge of technology, the height of entertainment. We were out booking movies. I think what we were was the interface that made people comfortable with things on a video screen, so that later they would be comfortable with computers. We were novel and new in that respect.

Were pinballs getting complex in order to compete with video games?

No, I don't think that was it. We just lost sight or were struggling to find our market. What we need is a game that is challenging to a good player but can be played by the guy with my eye/hand coordination! I used to tell Harry Williams, when he said that the kids were going to love a certain feature, that in half of your locations your job is to get people drunk—forget the kids! Our market is a little older than the video game market. If you look at our games outside of the country—we export half of our product—the locations in Europe have a rule that you must be 18 to go in an arcade, since they have the wall machines. So our market is not necessarily small children.

You've been in the business all of your life. What were some of the major changes?

Oh boy, that's tough. This is certainly a cyclical business, and we've had our cycles. Technological developments have changed it significantly. The arcade and family amusement center is a growth that wasn't there many years ago. Certainly the influx of video games has made it an international business on the supply side. It's not as large of a business as we once thought it was. It's still a good business, but not like it was in the heyday.

Then we had all the public companies in here like Coca-Cola, Warner Communications, Columbia Pictures—ones not necessarily well-suited for this business. My father taught me that this industry is not well-suited for a public company because of the cyclical and seasonal style of it. We have seen many of the public companies leave the business. It's more entrepreneurial; even the large Japanese companies were entrepreneurial.

Data East Pinball is owned by the Japanese, yet pinball is supposedly an American product.

Yes, we are owned by Japanese but we are very unusual for a Japanese-owned company. Normally, if the Japanese open a company in the United States, whether to make cars or video games, they put a Japanese person in my seat. They do all the engineering and design in Japan. They send all of the expensive parts—motors or printed circuit boards—from Japan. They assemble the car or the video game in the United States and sell all the goods in the United States.

In our case, we have had a lot of help with manufacturing technique from our Japanese owners, but we do all the design and engineering here. The only exception is our original printed circuit board design, which was done by the excellent electronics people in Japan. We source all of our parts here in Chicago. We buy nothing from our California parent or our grandparent in Tokyo. We export half of our goods. In fact, we export a lot of product back to Japan! You don't see the car companies or video game companies here doing that. We build a product that is good

enough for the Japanese to buy.

It's unusual, but it's probably the way the two countries should work together. At the same time, our factory is somewhat Japanese in philosophy, although that was part of the business plan even before Data East decided to get into it. We buy more sub-assemblies and concentrate more on final assemblies and testing than most pinball companies do. We don't have our own punch presses, coil winding equipment, etc., which means we can get into the business by training and supervising less people. That was important to get off and running in a mature business like this.

How receptive have the distributors been to Data East selling pinballs?

I talked with many of the distributors myself, and even more to their technicians, on a regular basis. The rapport has been excellent. We must keep in mind that in this business, as a manufacturer, we have multiple customers. We have to have support from these customers in order to continue. The customers include the distributor, who has to make money with our product. It includes the operator, to whom our product is capital goods. We all know it includes the player, but it also includes the location owner. Once again, we need to draw the player into the location and keep him there. We may pay the location rent, but basically the other part of the business is what he makes his money on. We are entertainment that augments his business. One of the key things is that the goods have to work and be high-quality.

If I learned anything from our Japanese grandparent, it's quality. We have taken steps—some very recent—to ensure quality. We do things that no one else does. We play each game for a half hour after we inspect it. We started that a number of months ago. Then a technician re-inspects the game. The engineering department goes through about 10 percent of our games in order to audit them. We do the expected, too. We have light boards so that the main cable, the spine of a pinball machine, can be computer-tested. We have more interim inspection than anyone I have ever seen.

Aren't you introducing a new type of flipper on *RoboCop*?

On *RoboCop*, we are introducing what I would call the technological advance of the decade on pinball machines. We are using a solid-state flipper, which means there is no end-of-stroke switch. The end-of-stroke switch is the most troublesome thing in a pinball machine. We have tested this for about a year. We built a run of one game about six months ago and sent them out; the results were excellent. We are so excited and confident about it that I am guaranteeing that no flipper coil will burn out for a year or I'll replace it—free!

"I haven't been in the video game industry for awhile, but I feel that building a pinball machine is much more complex."

We are also using a single-wound coil. Both the single-winding coil and solid-state flipper are covered by a patent that should be issued soon.

As little as I know about pinball, I have heard many complaints about flipper assemblies. Why is it so troublesome?

When you hit the ball with the flipper you are giving it 50 volts. Once the ball is hit and the flipper is fully extended, you need to hold it with a weaker power. We hold ours with eight volts and use a single-winding coil. When the flipper is fully extended, a switch lowers the voltage for the holding of the flipper. We don't have that switch. That EOS switch getting out of adjustment is a major problem in pinballs. If it's out of adjustment, you will be holding the flipper with the same voltage you use to hit the ball. The result is the flipper coil will burn up.

We have totally reworked some other parts for reliability. Our biggest concern is reliability. We intend to make our pinballs as well-running as my Japanese car!

So you have very few mechanical problems now?

That's correct. Those that have our newer pinball machines will attest to that.

How do you come up with themes?

Joe Kaminkow is wonderful at coming up with ideas. *Monday Night Football* came obviously from watching TV. We have a game that 60 million people see every Monday night. Now we are starting to build *RoboCop* as a pinball. The theme was very strong on a video game. We have licensed "Batman" and will be making a *Batman* pinball machine sometime in the future. Watch the news and read the paper, and you will see themes for games.

That's not a new concept. Pinballs have been fashioned off of popular ideas or people before.

Yes, but so often the timing has been off. For example, all pinball machine companies made a bi-centennial pinball machine, but some came out in 1977! The timing is important with a theme like that. A pinball machine is like a movie; it must have theme, but it must also have good action, a climax, good artwork or photography, good sound effects, and distribution and promotion. We have true stereo in our pinball machines; that was our initial hook.

We've written some wonderful music. *RoboCop* has our best music yet. We've licensed music once or twice, but generally we write it in-house and it's fantastic. At our first trade show, I danced with my shoes off in front of our games for three days! It adds to the entire play of the game. We put over $150 worth of stereo in every game. It is a small-margin business, but we put the money where it counts. The solid-state flipper does not come for free. It is an expensive thing for us to put into a game, yet it's a very reliable thing. We think it is worth it.

From what I've heard from operators, they don't seem to mind paying a little extra for a quality flipper assembly.

Well, we are not charging extra, but that's why we came along with a solid-state flipper.

My father said that he would rather make a good game that works than a great game that doesn't. Well, we are making great games that work! □

Taito blows your doors off with .44-magnum power

Taito of America held a distributor showing in Atlanta during the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) show in mid-November. Taito distributors were treated to a presentation of Taito's latest game, *Special Criminal Investigation* or *S.C.I.* for short.

This dedicated driving game incorporates a high-speed car chase with the ability to shoot at the fleeing suspect. The game features U.S.-manufactured controls, including a newly designed and life-tested, 360-degree steering wheel; a turbo-charged shifter with gun-style grip and trigger; and a high-performance accelerator pedal.

Although the market has been deluged with expensive driving games, Taito offered a chart reflecting the trend of longevity for the games. After seven weeks on location the trend for fighting, gun, and sports games is to drop off. Driving games have been shown to remain steady long after seven weeks. □

"We're number one," says Jim Chapman as Joe Dillon holds a Taito sign. Here are the company's executives with distributors.

Taito's Rick Rochetti (standing) welcomes Brady's Tom Kiel (l) and Blair Norris.

Distributors gather around as Jim Chapman explains the game.

On the threshold of the '80s

As the industry faced a new decade, editor and publisher Ralph Lally wrote in his editorial, "It may do us all well to reflect on some of the more important events of the past decade."

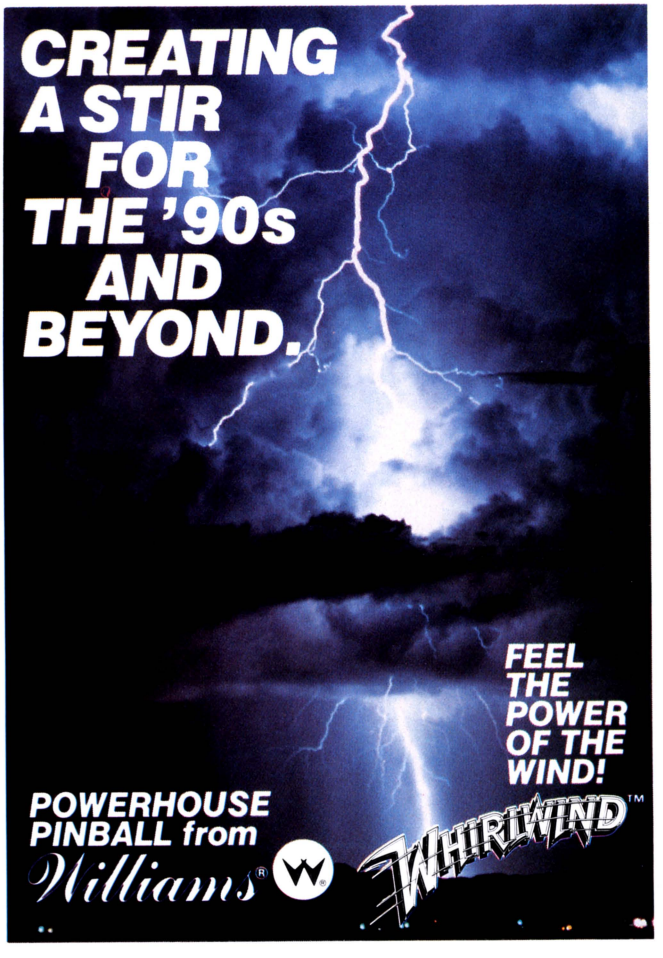
He went on to say, "The 1970s would have to be called the most productive and innovative decade the industry has ever experienced. The biggest splash of all was the introduction of the first video games."

Ralph was also the Coinman Interview that month. He was celebrating five years of publishing the first trade publication for the industry and reflected on those years. Although he agreed to the interview reluctantly, Ralph felt that with the Amusement Operators Expo just beginning, it was an opportune time to clear the air about things like the show and Play Meter's editorial policy.

Play Meter focused much of its January 1980 issue on state associations. A list was compiled of all the active associations with pertinent information on the number of years in business, whether legal counsel was employed, the date of the state show, and how many members each association had. An article entitled "Operators Look to Upgrade State Associations" was about a meeting with 50 operators seeking to improve their standing with local and state governments.

Play Meter also ran an interesting article called "Shift Your Market to the Upper Age Brackets" by economist Dr. William Freund. He began with the following: "The '80s won't be such a bad decade. We'll have a recession in 1979 and early 1980, but better times lie ahead." Freund went on to explain that a recession was the only answer to stubborn inflation.

Play Meter carried an announcement about a new Japanese company opening on American shores. That company, Universal USA, would have a dramatic impact in later years with the first truly successful conversion kit, *Mr. Do!*.



In other industry news 10 years ago, Exidy acquired the use of vector technology by purchasing Cinematronics' subsidiary, Vectorbeam; Stern Electronics expanded its production capability with the purchase of a 180,000 square foot building; D.Gottlieb & Co. promoted Robert Bloom and Jack Mittel; Sega Enterprises reported record net earnings of $6.2 million for the first quarter; Pizza Time Theatres, the chain started by Nolan Bushnell, was expanding out of California; and Play Meter ran an attendee brochure for its first AOE show, which was scheduled for March in New Orleans.

Pinballs were still listed ahead of video games on the equipment poll. In January 1980 the top pinballs were *Flash, Kiss, Meteor, Paragon, Playboy, Sharpshooter, Stellar Wars, Superman, Genie,* and *Harlem.* The top video games were *Space Invaders, Football, Sprint II, Head-On, Lunar Lander, Space Wars, Starfire, Crash, Star Hawk,* and *Sea Wolf.*

Products introduced in Play Meter's New Products section included *Bandido* from Exidy; *Submarine* by Midway; *War*, a cocktail video from Viza Manufacturing; Stern's outer space fantasy pinball, *Galaxy*; *Super Speed Race*, Midway's full- color driving game; Williams' *Gorgar*, the world's first talking pinball; Midway's *Space Invaders II*, a cocktail version of the hit game; *Side Trak*, Exidy's "palm-sweating excitement of the Orient Express" video game; and Gottlieb's *Buck Rogers*, a pinball based on the well-known sci-fi daredevil. □

Hey man, give me five!

In an industry first, five manufacturers (SNK, Capcom, Data East, Atari, and Sega) previewed their new products under one roof at a joint distributor meeting. It was held at the end of November in San Francisco.

Distributors have long complained that too many trips to too many meetings is expensive and time consuming. "Having five manufacturers together was a great idea," noted one distributor. "It was time well-spent." It seems that each distributor had an opinion about the advantage and disadvantage of having a joint meeting. One comment was that manufacturers showed product that was not available. A distributor explained, "I didn't see anything I couldn't live without, but even if I had, I couldn't get it now." Another added, "I barely know what I'm going to be selling next week, let alone two months from now!"

One distributor summed up the meeting this way: "It was good and it was bad. First of all, there was so much going on in such a short time that I didn't get a chance to order any product!" I don't thing they'll do it again, but it was a nice try. The number of meetings does tend to get out of control."

There is no word from the manufacturers as to whether they will try joint meetings in the future. Most agreed that distributors got away without making solid commitments for product like they would have had one manufacturer held a captive audience. However, said one manufacturer, "I don't think distributors bought as much at this show, but we have orders coming in every day to make up for it."

Atari's Mary Fujihara said, "This meeting was the right timing considering the length of time between ACME and AMOA. And it was certainly cost-effective for the distributors. If it was the right timing again, we would participate in a joint meeting."

SNK

SNK introduced its new arcade piece, *Beast Busters*, a three-gun adventure. The player, assuming the role of Johnny Justice, Paul Patriot, or Sammy Stately, sets out to investigate a town where people go but never return.

The game comes with a new hardware package and added memory storage. The large piece on the front of the game (the one that holds the three guns) detaches, allowing the game to fit through doorways. Since the game features some gory scenes, there is a dip switch to turn the blood to green for a less-shocking effect.

Capcom

Capcom made several key announcements before its product introduction. The first is a revamping of its service department. Capcom has all new people in the service department and guarantees 24-hour turnaround on any board.

Another announcement was its plan to cut back on the number of distributors. "We are going more towards fewer but better distributors," said Bill Cravens. Betson Pacific was named "Distributor of the Year" and presented with an award from Capcom.

Capcom showed two new games, *Buster Bros.* and *Final Fight*. *Buster Bros.* is not a CPS game; it is a very inexpensive kit licensed from Mitchell.

The company describes *Buster Bros.* as a two-player interactive game combining the best parts of *Bubble Bobble*, *Arkanoid*, *Asteroids*, and *Mario Bros.* Game play is imaginative, with 50 levels beginning at the base of Mount Fuji and continuing through Russia, India, and Europe. *Buster Bros.* is available immediately.

Final Fight is next in the series of CPS games using Capcom's CPS "Super Chip." The player attempts to rescue Haggar's kidnapped daughter, Jessica. *Final Fight* was released at the end of December.

Sega

Sega has done it again with an arcade oriented shoot-'em-up game called *Line of Fire*. The game features a deluxe cabinet with two seats, allowing for one- or two-player interaction. When two are playing they shoot at the same screen. When the player on the left hits a target, that target turns blue; when the one on the right hits one, it turns red.

Two agents sneak into a guerrilla military base and steal the enemy's latest and most powerful machine gun. While attempting to escape, the agents are confronted by a barrage of enemy weapons, ranging from hand grenades to rockets and missiles.

Sega's *Shadow Dancer* marks the return of the powerful young Ninja warrior that made *Shinobi* a smash hit. The warrior and his attacking canine partner match martial arts skills with a brutal band of highly trained terrorists. The game is offered as a kit with JAMMA wiring harness, circuit board, full cabinet graphics, and twin control sets.

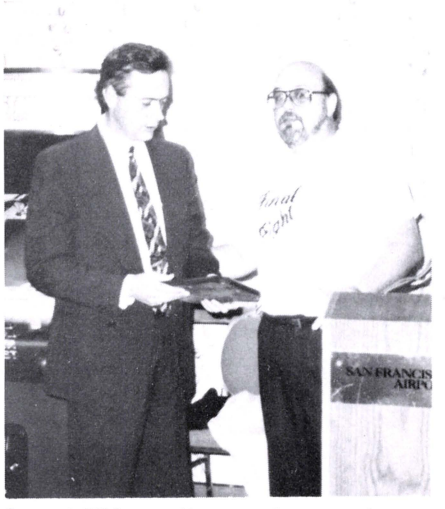
Data East

Data East's Steve Walton told the audience that video games have gone through some strange changes. He also pointed out that "Konami's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is challenging the competition to

Distributors check out *RoboCop* as Joe Kaminkow (l) looks on.

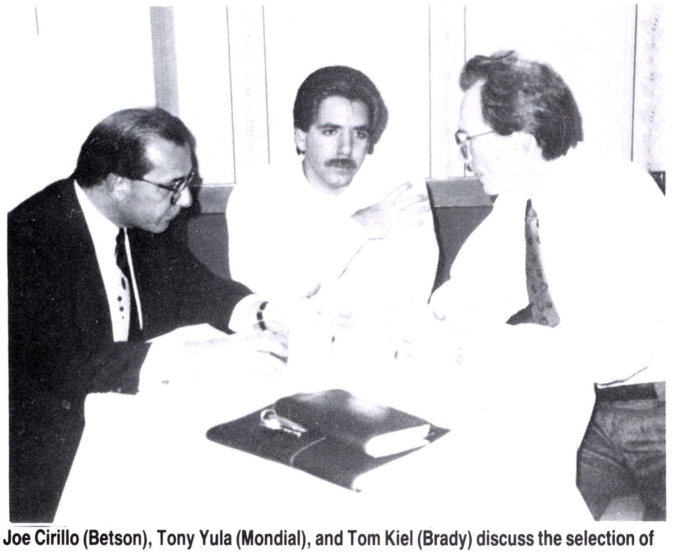
Central Distributing's Mark Singer (l) tries his shooting skills with Tracy Tate.

Data East's Joe Kaminkow (l) and Gary Stern with the new solid-state flipper.



Capcom's Bill Cravens (r) presents the company's "Distributor of the Year" award to John Lotz of Betson Pacific.

The SNK crew by *Beast Busters*, (l-r): Neil Zook, Tracy Tate, Rachael Davies, and John Barone.



Joe Cirillo (Betson), Tony Yula (Mondial), and Tom Kiel (Brady) discuss the selection of games.

Sue Jarocki (l) talks with Nickels & Dimes' Dave Roberts.

work harder.'' He added that the industry can't survive on one game, but on many good games.

Gary Stern focused on reliability and quality circles. He told Data East distributors that the new solid-state coil used in the new *RoboCop* pinball is revolutionary. Joe Kaminkow said the first games were sent out with no instructions or spare parts, and there were no requests for any! ''Of 150 games, there were no burned flippers,'' he added.

RoboCop is a delight to play and look at. The playfield features a jump ramp for extra points and digital stereo sound. The company boasts that the game is designed for fast action and is built to take it with color-coded, easy-to-understand rules. And, of course, the solid-state flipper eliminates one of the most troublesome parts of a pinball. Joe Kaminkow quipped, ''Now all we need is a self-cleaning pinball!''

In addition to *RoboCop*, Data East showed *Wacky Gator*, a novelty piece first shown at AMOA in September; and *Midnight Resistance*, a top video that has been out in the marketplace.

Atari

Atari showed a universal kit called *Skull & Crossbones*, which features pirates fighting to the finish for food, drink, booty, and revenge. Their adventures take them around the world to battle fierce captains and crews of opponent ships. Players use a joystick and sword button in a combination of defensive and offensive maneuvers. The kit is available now.

Badlands is Atari's universal driving game kit. It includes PCB, two steering wheel assemblies, control panel mounting plate, two foot pedal assemblies, four fire button assemblies, and a JAMMA harness. Players are in an age 50 years after a nuclear disaster. The sport of Sprint racing is now a ruthless battle between armed cars. These races take place on tracks built in the ruins of the dangerous nuclear zone known only as ''the badlands.''

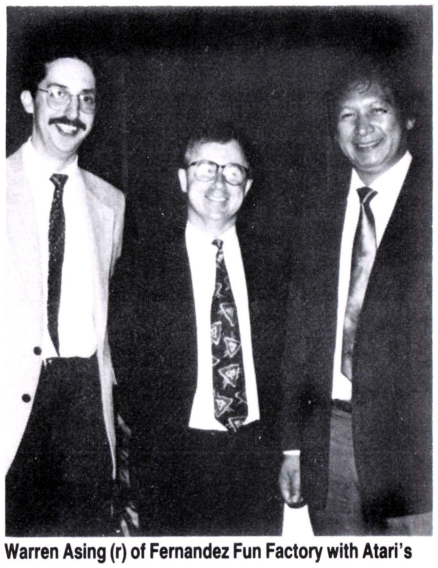
There are eight track layouts with unique, animating backgrounds that react to player shots and crashes. Players can add coins to quickly customize their cars with missiles, tires, turbo speed, and shields. □

Capcom's Brian Duke (l) surprised Pacific Vend's Sam Fedder when he tried to jump in his lap!

Oh, you beautiful doll, you great big beautiful doll! How can you expect distributors to be serious all the time, says State Sales' Steve Koenigsberg (l) and Shaffer's Bill Kraft.

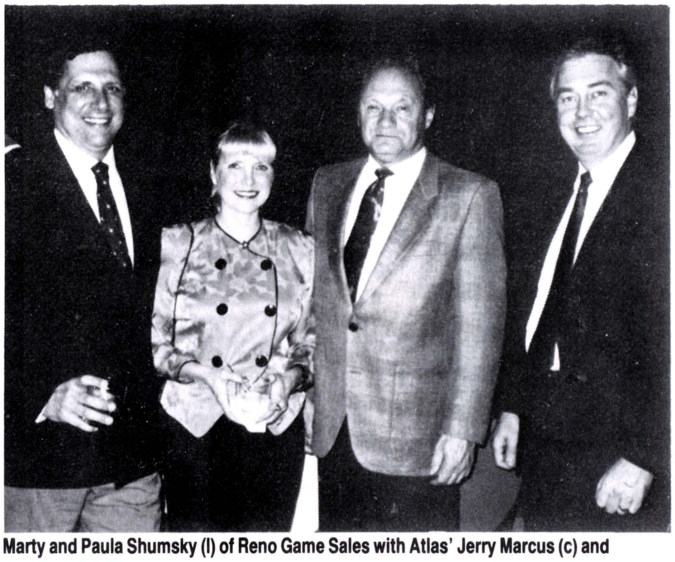
MANUFACTURER MEETINGS

Proud of Sega's new kit are, (l-r): Howell Ivy, Tom Petit, and Scott Yasuda.



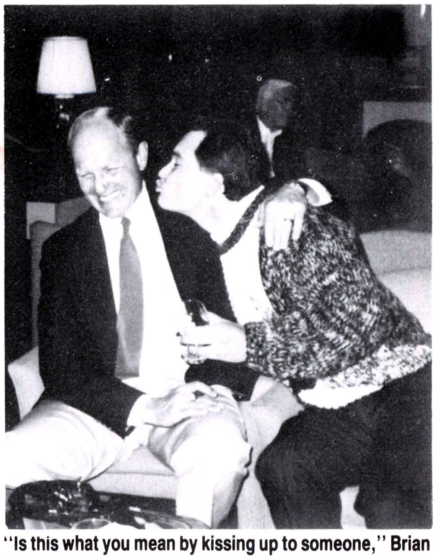
Warren Asing (r) of Fernandez Fun Factory with Atari's David Bishop (l) and Kevin Hayes.

Distributors Mike Wilkinson (SunBelt), Jim Franz (H.A. Franz), and Kelly Flynn (J & J).



Marty and Paula Shumsky (l) of Reno Game Sales with Atlas' Jerry Marcus (c) and Sega's John Hill.

We caught the Atari staff for this group shot. Left to right are: Hide Nakajima, Frank Cosentino, Mary Fujihara, Elaine Shirley, Shane Breaks, Linda Benzler, Jim Newlander, Anne Hayes, and Jerry Momoda.



"Is this what you mean by kissing up to someone," Brian Duke asks Peter Betti of Betson Pacific.

BullShooter Tour stops in Florida

Arachnid's BullShooter V Tour paid a visit to Orlando, Fla., on Oct. 20-22, 1989—the fifth stop in the $135,000 qualifying dart tour. The electronic dart manufacturer co-sponsored the event with Southern Music of Orlando. Arachnid's *English Mark Darts* served as the official dart game.

Eight events comprised the regional tournament, which was held at the Orlando Twin Towers. The events were Pro Singles, Open Singles, Women's Singles, Cricket Singles, Open Doubles, Women's Doubles, Mixed Doubles, and Mixed Doubles Cricket.

The prestigious Pro Singles was won by Terry Mutton of Illinois. Elona Beatty of Pennsylvania took first place honors in Women's Singles, while Georgia's Jim Newbury captured the top prize in Open Singles. The top eight winners in each event were awarded cash prizes. First through third place also received trophies and qualifying certificates. The certificates allow them entry into the BullShooter finals in Chicago during Memorial Day weekend.

For more information, call Arachnid at (800) 435-8319 or (815) 654-0212. □

Arachnid tournament director Dave Schultz (l) with Terry Mutton, who won first prize in Pro Singles.

Schultz with Elona Beatty, the tournament champion in Women's Singles.

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To Our Customers

For a decade of tremendous growth and the best year in our 16-year history.

For helping us achieve this rapid growth as we enter the 90's.

1989

#1 Overall Sales	#1 Coin Op Pool Table Sales	#1 Video Hardware System Sales
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2525 Handley Ederville Rd.
Richland Hills, TX 76118

Air hockey championship draws cross-country crowd

Veteran air hockey players from all over the country gathered at Houston's Fame City entertainment complex in early November for a chance at the coveted title of National Air Hockey Champion. Despite the wealth of experience around the tables, 19-year-old Tim "Young Wolf" Weissman captured his second straight title.

Cash and prizes totaling $7,500 were awarded at the event, which was sponsored by Dynamo, Fame City, Games People Play, Fun Factory Inc., U.S. Golf & Games, Red Baron's Nickelodeon Fun Factory, and other local businesses.

Houston's KPRC-TV, Channel 2, covered the event. Competition took place in Fame City's eight-table air hockey room, while the main concourse showcased the sport thanks to three tables set up by All Prime Amusements and Recreation Sports.

Other top finishers in men's Pro A division were: Jesse Douty, an 11-time champion, second; Robert Hernandez, third; Phil Arnold, fourth; Paul Marshall, fifth; Mike Barry, sixth; Vince Schappell, seventh; Joe Campbell, eighth; Anton Mawhood, ninth; and T.C. Cabot, tenth.

Tuna Gill won the Men's Pro B division; Keith Fletcher won Expert; Steve Titus won Amateur; and David Slavin captured Novice. William Upchurch won double honors as National Junior Champion and the top finish by a new player, 19th overall.

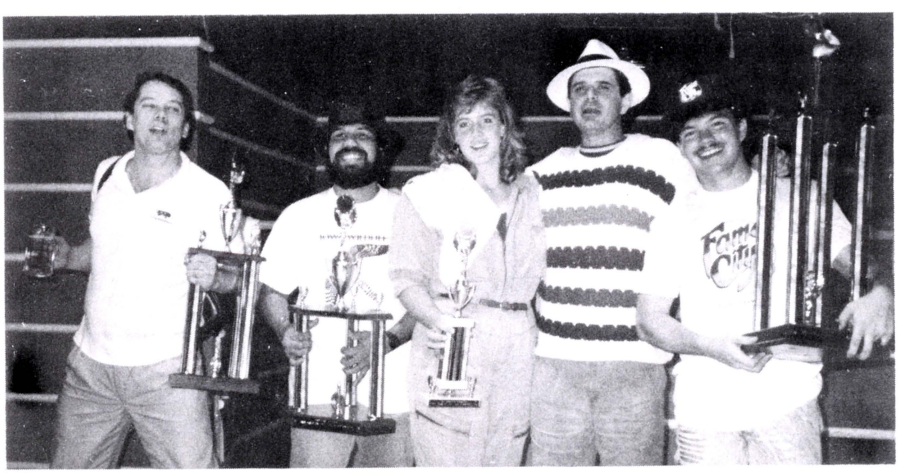
In the Women's playoff, newcomer Connie Rector ended Patrice Nale's record seven-win streak. Shortly before the nationals, Rector and Nale battled in a marathon 48-game challenge match in which Nale emerged victorious after six hours of play.

The "father of air hockey," Bob Lemieux, was a special guest at the championship. Now retired, Lemieux was a designer and engineer with Brunswick for many years. He was heartened by the long-term dedication of many players.

For more information on national and regional tournaments and promotions, call Mark Robbins at Dynamo, (800) 527-6054 or (817) 589-7699. □

From left: veteran player Phil Arnold, Bob Lemieux, and Dynamo's Mark Robbins.

Phil Arnold and Tim Weissman in the heat of battle.



Winners all, (l-r): Jesse Douty, Robert Hernandez, Connie Rector, Phil Arnold, and Tim Weissman.

AND NOW . . .
A WORD FROM OUR READERS!!!

An operator challenged us to provide space and invite everyone in the coin machine business to write about what is right, wrong, or can be corrected within the industry. OK, here's the space. Now it's up to all of you to fill it with comments on the industry. We will not print your name if you so request, but we will print your comments just as you have them. The operator suggested running the page for three issues, but we will leave it indefinitely if you continue to send your opinions.

PLEASE FOLD HERE

PLACE
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PLAY METER
magazine
P.O. Box 24970
New Orleans, LA 70184

READER'S RESPONSE

Operators, this column is devoted to you. It is your chance to have your voice heard on the state of the industry. We welcome all complaints, compliments, and comments and will print letters as received when possible.

We would appreciate it if you would refrain from sending a scathing letter about a specific manufacturer. Instead, we would like your general observations on the industry. Your name will not be used if you so request. Take a few moments to share your thoughts with the rest of the coin-operated entertainment industry. There is a self-addressed sheet waiting for you to fill out and return to us.

Operator seeks answers to nagging questions

I have operated in the Dallas market since 1982 and understand this makes me a member of the "video boomers" generation. This also may decrease the value of my opinion, but I feel strongly about the coin-op industry.

In 1982, I was a mere rookie and only 21 years old. Today, after seeing the rise, the fall, and the depressed leveling off in my market, I have found my business a success. This success has little to do with the superior, knowledgeable advice my local distributor so graciously gives me as he steers me toward the piece he has 10 more of in the warehouse. It comes more from remaining skeptical and being extremely patient in purchasing.

I have seasoned well over these turbulent years and come to absolutely distrust all in the chain above my level, both manufacturer and distributor.

The more people I speak to inside my level of the industry, the more I find frequent and never-ending dissatisfaction with distributors for being misleading in regard to game quality. Other operators who choose not to listen to distributors are usually very successful small operators (under $300,000 annual income). The ones who listen are no longer in this industry.

I feel this business is designed for seven-figure operations. I would personally enjoy knowing who is at the top in our industry. I recommend a survey that indicates the total number of operators and breaks them into categories such as these: those taking in $250,000 a year and under, $251,000 a year to $500,000, etc. I would probably be astonished to find a majority over the $250,000 level. Prove me wrong if you can.

Many other questions come to my mind, such as: What goes into development? What is the objective in development? When is a game ready for distribution? What is the goal in depth-of-play when a game is being designed? Is obsolescence purposely designed into a game?

As if these are not enough, how about these: Why do so many games come to operators with inferior or defective parts? How many games must a manufacturer sell to be profitable? Why not retrofit driving games? Why does the American market pay more for all types of amusement devices?

I have met success and enjoy my new friend. It keeps company with me only as long as I do not forget the principles that have brought me to its doorstep. These include honesty, hard and diligent work, a strong sense of fair play, and low overhead whenever possible.

I need education to advance in this industry. Education does not come from fluff,; it comes from factual information. Recounting what a successful seven-figure operation makes on a game doesn't help those operators on my level.

Here is a hypothetical situation: take a new game that costs $2,495, add $95 freight and $207 tax, and you have a total bill of $2,797. Multiply this figure by four (four quarters for $1) and you come out with $11,188!, the actual price I have to take in to pay for this piece, not including everyday overhead and insurance. My business operates on quarters. The location takes 50 percent commission, which I do not consider unfair. Now, multiply the $11,188 by two for a total of 22,376 plays to pay for the game. Tell me just how many operators can succeed in turning a profit on this one—count it—one game?

I am curious to know how many other operators have games with 22,376 plays on their coin meter. Of those, how many are less than one-year old? If those who can honestly say the game produced 22,376 plays, how many of these operators are under the $250,000 annual income level?

Do the manufacturers even involve themselves with these numbers? Will this one opinion or a thousand similar ones make a difference?

If my opinion is off-center, and I truly hope so, educate me on where I have made mistakes. If my formula is wrong, show me one that works. If nothing I have stated has any ground on which to stand, educate me. Knowledge is the only tool an entrepreneur has to work with in his chosen field. If I am ignorant, show me what I need to know. If I am right, do not ignore me.

Play Meter is a tool, or was designed as one. Today, I feel it is Propaganda Times, sold out to the highest bidder. I hope I can be proven wrong.

I am a success and still growing. I make mistakes every day. I want to understand my business more. Thank you for this opportunity. My life, my business, and my education moves on. □

James Orr
Empire Games
Dallas, Texas

Editor's Note: James Orr sent this letter along with his response to our Annual State of the Industry Survey. We are happy to print his letter, warts and all. He has detailed problems he faces in his business and he is not alone. Just by printing the letter we hope to dispel his feeling that the magazine has "sold out." If this were really the case we wouldn't have the guts to reproduce his thoughts within our pages.

We invite other operators, as well as distributors and manufacturers, to write to us addressing the points he has made. Our Reader's Response page, Letters page, and Guest Commentary are all designed to bring the good points and bad points of this business out into the open. We're awaiting an avalanche of mail, but probably won't get it. Manufacturers and distributors will be angry, operators will nod in agreement, and everyone will sit on their hands. □

Bryan E. Milling

Protect your business against computer viruses

Computers have become an integral part of the operations of most modern independent business enterprises. They store and maintain the bulk of the accounting functions in many businesses. They often hold customer lists, purchase orders, and essential inventory data. Indeed, some businesses maintain *all* of their operating data in computers.

Most business managers view their computers as reliable electronic devices. Apart from occasional operating errors, the computers seldom disrupt a firm's operations.

But many business managers ignore a "live" threat to computers that can bring a firm's operations to a complete halt. The threat comes from an electronic organism that professionals call a **computer virus**. A computer virus can damage or destroy computer files essential for a firm's profitable operations.

This discussion reviews the dangers that computer viruses pose to modern business enterprises. The discussion also touches on some measures that can help protect a business against computer viruses.

A computer virus grows out of a set of deliberate instructions by a clever programmer. The programmer typically attaches the instructions to other programs or software used in a firm's computers. The instructions then may spread among other programs and software before being discovered.

The motives for introducing computer viruses into innocent programs vary. Some stem from a dismissed programmer's desire to "get even" with a former employer. Others stem from perverse senses of humor. Still others may stem from vindictive personalities or anti-social adolescents who enjoy inflicting financial damage on others.

Whatever the motive, a computer virus becomes an intrusion that can make computers produce unpredictable, undesirable, and uncontrollable results. One virus may alter valuable computer accounting records. Another virus may make it impossible to call up necessary files or programs. Still another virus may erase information stored on computer discs.

View the potential damage from a business manager's perspective. A computer virus may alter or erase vital accounts receivable and accounts payable records. Inventory control systems can vanish; budgets and financial forecasts can disappear. Production plans can evaporate. A computer virus can become a disruptive influence to the profitable operation of a business enterprise.

Some computer viruses can become even more threatening. They grow in a manner of an "electronic cancer." They remain disguised early in their lives. At that stage, even experienced programmers can overlook the distortions they introduce. But these viruses become more virulent over time. As they grow, they become more disruptive and flaw more of a computer's output. They begin distorting calculations or erasing vital data.

Moreover, a virus can be designed to continue growing until it occupies all of a computer's memory. That makes the computer useless and can seriously disrupt a firm's operations. No computer enjoys complete immunity from computer viruses. Even an in-house computer with no electronic link to other computers can be struck by a virus. A computer virus can come from a number of sources that appear innocent to the uninitiated.

"The best protection against computer viruses comes from continuously making backup copies of everything a business wants to save."

Public domain software remains the most common source of computer viruses. The virus spreads when an innocent user extracts the software from an electronic bulletin board. But commercial, across-the-counter software has also become a source of computer viruses. That potential increases when a business buys cheap or off-brand software.

In some instances, a computer virus can infect "clean" software. Clever programmers may introduce the virus intentionally. Or, the software can pick up a virus while interacting with other software that's already infected.

The threats from computer viruses should make every business manager vigilant. The failure to anticipate that threat can result in severe financial

damage when a damaging virus disrupts a firm's operation. So let's turn to the measures that can help prevent an infection in your business.

An effective computer security program provides the first line of defense against computer viruses. As a first step, establish effective administrative procedures. That begins with the designation of a single person with the responsibility for computer security. That person then will restrict access to the firm's computers to those with a bona fide need.

From a different perspective, a business should preclude inept, disloyal, or unreliable people from computer access. Such individuals raise the potential threat from computer viruses. They may accidentally or intentionally infect a computer with a virus.

At the same time, make people in sensitive positions aware of their responsibilities. Complement that with a continuous training and awareness program. The growing threat from computer viruses clearly warrants that effort. Fix responsibility for all security-relevant actions. Employees using computers should leave audit trails, sign-in, sign-out logs, and double sign-offs on program changes. To make them effective, managers must regularly review the logs to ensure that employees recognize the importance.

Reinforce that restriction with internal security measures to limit an employee access to only the data and files relevant to his jobs. Assign individual passwords that employees should keep confidential. Purchase software only from reliable suppliers. Then, clearly control the use of the software that the business owns.

Never lend the software to users outside of the business. They may be unaware of a computer virus already infecting their systems. The virus may attach itself to your software; your own systems then will become infected. Also, never allow employees to use outside software on company computers.

In a recent case, an employee used one of the firm's personal computers to play a computer game during his lunch hour. A virus hidden in the game infected the computer. Unfortunately, the computer was linked through a network with nine other personal computers used in the business. Before being discovered, the virus had infected a significant proportion of the firm's software.

For the same reason, a business should never use public domain or borrowed software. Nor should a business use demonstrator software offered by offbeat, unknown suppliers. Instigators recognize these as easy ways to spread computer viruses.

The best protection against computer viruses comes from continuously making backup copies of everything a business wants to save. Computer viruses can only damage discs and data within a computer. Constantly updating backup discs stored separately limits the damage a business can sustain from information erased by a virus. A secure library—separate from a firm's computers—should be used to store backup tapes or discs. Additional backup tapes and discs may be stored off-site.

Businesses can also use "vaccine" programs to help protect against computer viruses. Vaccines detect computer viruses in their latent stages, i.e., before they activate and infect a firm's computer system. Ideally, these anti-virus programs should be used for new software to detect viruses before a business uses the software in its computer system.

Anti-virus vaccines do suffer from a logical limitation. Programmers design the vaccines to identify and eliminate previously identified viruses. Insidious, more-recent viruses may escape detection.

Computers will remain critical in modern business enterprises. And computer viruses will undoubtedly remain disruptive threats to those computers. Prudent business managers will exert a continuous, conscientious effort to protect their computers against electronic infections. □

Bryan Milling is an instructor of business subjects at the college level. He has been published extensively in trade and professional magazines.

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Irving L. Blackman

Mileage allowance for business cars gets boost

Are you tired of keeping record of the actual expenses you pay for the business use of your car? Take heart; there is another legal way to do it. Taxpayers can use an optional mileage allowance when calculating such expenses. If you choose to use the optional method, keeping records of expenses is no longer necessary.

Instead, just keep track of the business miles driven and use the IRS mileage allowance. And here's some additional good news: the IRS just announced an increase in the allowance to 25.5 cents per mile for 1989 (up from 24 cents in 1988).

The 25.5-cent rate is for the first 15,000 miles driven; it's 11 cents (unchanged from 1988) per mile for any excess. Let me give you an example. Joe Sales travels by auto to sell his wares. He is tired of keeping records of gas receipts, repairs, and maintenance. Joe stopped keeping records of his actual expenses in June 1989. He only kept track of business miles—27,300 for all of 1989.

This is how Joe figures his auto expense deduction: 15,000 x 25.5 cents = $3,825; 12,300 x 11 cents = $1,353. The total is $5,178. In addition to the mileage deduction, Joe can deduct 100 percent of his business tolls and business parking.

The 25.5-cents-a-mile allowance may or may not be your best tax bet. Take advantage of it only if you have neither the time nor the inclination to keep those expense receipts, or if past practice has proved that your actual expenses (including depreciation) are not more than the allowance. If your actual expenses are more than the allowance, you must decide if the reduced record-keeping (mileage only) is worth the lost tax dollars caused by the smaller deduction.

The rate for a car operated in connection with charitable activities remains unchanged at 12 cents per mile. For purposes of medical expense deductions, the rate also remains unchanged at nine cents per mile.

Social Security costs skyrocket

The cost of funding the Social Security tax (FICA) system has broken away from the pull of gravity (logic). Employers and employees alike are weighed down by the burden of paying a tax that's gone out of sight.

"As soon as you finish your 1989 tax return, use it as a guide to plan for your 1990 return."

Here are the facts for 1990. The Social Security wage base rockets to $50,400—up from $48,000 in 1989. The employer's and employee's rate is boosted to 7.65 percent—up from 7.51 percent. What's the exact damage? Well, for each employee earning $50,400 or more, the extra burden will be $250.80 for the employer. And don't forget, the employee gets hit for the same amount.

This means that the employer and employee combined must cough up an additional $501.60 to the FICA system. Let's see, that's $3,855.60 each for the employer and employee, or a total of $7,711.20 for such employee per year. Compare that to the total top cost of $2,808 in 1979, and you begin to realize how out of control Social Security costs are. It's like a science fiction story—unbelievable!

Are you self-employed? The rate soars from 13.02 percent to 15.3 percent. This means that your 1990 Social Security (Self-Employment) tax on the new top-taxable earnings of $50,400 skyrockets to $7,711.20—up from $6,249.60 for 1988. Like I said, in orbit.

There is one bit of good news. Starting in 1990, self-employed individuals deduct one-half of their Self-Employment tax. Here's a hint to help you get the Self-Employment tax and your net earnings right. The new law (Section 1402) defines net earnings from self-employment by deducting one-half of the Self-Employment tax. In effect, this means that you will be subject to the maximum Self-Employment tax if your Schedule C income is $54,256 or more.

Transfer your business and still keep control

The typical owner of a successful closely held family business wants it to continue after he is gone. Let's call him Joe. Sooner or later, Joe realizes that he must plan the transfer of his business to the next generation. When Joe shows up at my office to help initiate an organized transfer, I start by having him list his objectives. Here are the five most important objectives the typical owner will list:

1. Joe wants to slow down.

2. Joe wants to keep drawing the same salary for a number of years (he is 65).

3. Joe wants to keep control for as long as he lives.

4. Joe wants to transfer the business to his son, Joe Jr. As the only active child in the business, Joe Jr. should be able to run the business free of any interference from his brother or sister, who are not active in it.

5. Joe wants to reduce his estate taxes.

If you have some similar objectives—and a few more to boot—you are probably frustrated by the new law [Section 2036 (c)] that prevents estate freezes. The following are some hints that should help solve all or some of your and Joe's problems.

Elect S corporation status. By doing this, Joe can accomplish two things:

1. He can then take all of the profits of the corporation without getting hit with a double tax. If the business needs the money, Joe can loan it back to the corporation. The corporation will pay Joe interest on the loan, giving him another source of income.

2. He can now cut down on the time he puts in and lower his salary. This saves money in many ways. Less salary means less Social Security taxes, more Social Security benefits, and the elimination of the unreasonable compensation issue (a sore point with the IRS if Joe slows down but takes his old, full salary).

Recapitalize the company by issuing voting and non-voting stock. Let's say Joe winds up with 900 shares of non-voting stock and 100 shares of voting stock—all common stock. Joe then starts giving the non-voting stock to his three kids. He can give $10,000 to each child each year, or a total of $30,000. Since Joe is married, he can double the amount to $60,000 per year without paying one cent in gift taxes. What are some of the objectives accomplished?

1. Joe will reduce his estate by a minimum of $60,000 a year. Remember, if Joe gives away $60,000 worth of stock this year, but that same stock is worth $150,000 when he dies, he has reduced his estate by $150,000.

2. Since Joe will gift only the non-voting stock he will be in full control of the corporation, because he retained the voting stock, for as long as he lives.

3. Joe can leave the voting stock to Joe Jr. in his will. Thus, control will pass to Joe Jr. with no interference from his siblings.

It is important to note that this article does not attempt to cover all of the possibilities, opportunities, traps, or exceptions. Call your professional to get answers to your specific questions.

The new law and your tax return

Most of you will soon be filing your 1989 tax return. Here are some changes from last year that should help you.

Exemptions. On your 1989 returns, each personal exemption is boosted to $2,000—up from $1,950 on your 1988 returns.

Children. You must list the Social Security number of your dependents who are age two or older. Last year it was age five or older. Income of children under age 14 may be reported on the parent's return when it totals less than $5,000 and includes only interest and dividends.

Parents may not claim a dependency exemption for a full-time student who is over age 23 unless the child's gross income for the year is less than the $2,000 exemption amount.

Personal interest. Only 20 percent of personal interest paid in 1989 is deductible, down from 40 percent in 1988. The rate goes down to 10 percent for 1990; nothing is deductible for later years.

401(k) contributions. The maximum amount that can be contributed for each plan participant for 1989 is $7,627, up from $7,313 in 1988.

Here is an early warning signal. As soon as you finish your 1989 tax return, use it as a guide to plan for your 1990 return. The words "year-end tax planning" have become common buzz words, and you should continue to heed them—in about October or November. But for the best tax-saving results, the year-end plan should be an update of your April/May planning effort. □

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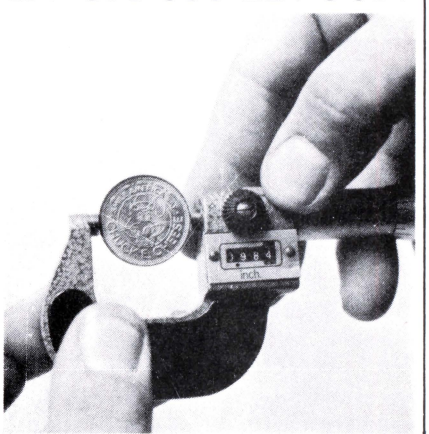

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Frank Seninsky

Tool kit checklist and redemption picks

Making sure that your employees always have the basic tools necessary to repair most of your games can greatly increase your service efficiency. How many times have you heard that tools were "stolen" or "misplaced," and the game didn't get fixed? How do your new employees learn which tools they need to help them perform well?

In today's fast-paced, action-packed world of coin-op it pays to take a few minutes each month and check your employees' tools. Here is a simple checklist that our head technician, Morris, put together with the help of Glen Anderson. With these tools he claims he can fix anything (if he had the right parts):

1. Tool box or case
2. Digital meter (auto range)
3. Soldering iron: Weller model WP-25 (25 watts) and solder
4. Solder vac
5. Wire stripper
6. Magnetic screwdriver with interchangeable tips (Craftsman)
7. Screwdriver set (Craftsman)
8. Screwdriver combo offset (Craftsman)
9. Allen driver set (Xcelite 99 ps-40)
10. Nut driver set (Xcelite 99-6 to 14)
11. Needle nose pliers
12. Diagonal cutter
13. Vice grips (small and large)
14. Crescent wrench
15. Channel locks
16. Hammer
17. Level
18. Wire brush (long bill changer model)
19. Electrical tape
20. Flashlight
21. Ignition file (Craftsman 8 inches)
22. Burnisher (GC)
23. Open-end wrenches (3/8-7/16, 1/4-5/16, 1/2-9/16, 5/8-3/4)
24. Flat file (Craftsman)
25. Round file
26. Ratchet set (SEA and metric)
27. Hook and scribe
28. Razor blade
29. Tamper torx (with insert tips: T10, T15, T20, T25, T30, T35, T40)
30. Electric drill (with bits: 3/8, 1/4, and smaller)
31. Alligator jumper leads
32. Deep socket (7/8-inch)
33. Glue gun
34. Eraser (soft red)
35. Extension cord
36. White lube
37. WD-40
38. Wire (assorted gauges)
39. Tape rule
40. Alignment stick
41. Pop rivet gun

Steve Schulman (l) and Ira Erstling of HMS Monaco show their new line of jewelry to Barbara and Dick Knoebel of Knoebel's Grove Park.

IAAPA showcases new looks in redemption

After seeing new equipment at the IAAPA Show, I can now add a couple of interesting redemption games to my list of possible purchases. Among these are the new mini ball-tossing game, *Toss Em*, and mini basketball, *Junior All American*, both from Coin Concepts.

In *Toss Em*, kids drop balls in holes with varied point values. The numbers look good on both of these items, which should be considered for large and small (little space) arcades and gamerooms.

Smart Industries and Betson Enterprises showed new super jumbo cranes that are almost entirely glass. The Smart game is the *Clean Sweep Classic Jumbo* and the Betson game is the *Big Choice Limited Edition*. These attractive units were set on $1 play and hitting four figure collections.

Seminar update

Just a short reminder that I will be teaming with Star*Tech Journal for a series of weekend industry seminars that may be in your area soon. Company managers will learn how to save big money so they can purchase more new games and perhaps some new test equipment for the shop.

Technicians will learn plenty, so the equipment will get up and running faster and stay that way longer. Here is the schedule:

—January 20-21, Brady Distributing Co., Charlotte, N.C.

—February 10-11, American Vending Sales, Elk Grove, Ill.

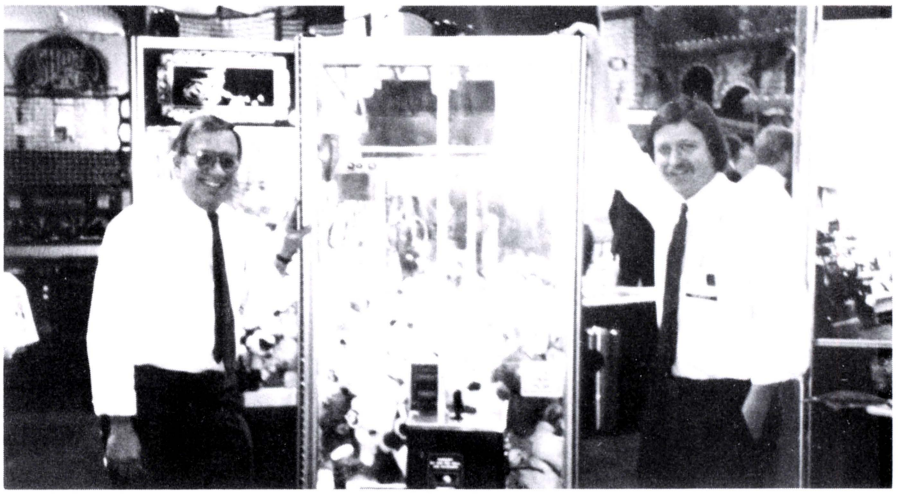
—March 31-April 1, Birmingham Vending, Orlando, Fla.

—April 21-22, New England Coin, Norwood, Mass.

—May 19-20, Betson Pacific, San Francisco, Calif.

As always . . . keep cranking. I hope to see many of you at the seminars. For more information, call me at (201) 287-4990. I guarantee that if you don't save money after attending one of the seminars I'll gladly refund your money. Bank on it! □

At the IAAPA Show, Nancy Sales Co. presented a new line of licensed merchandise that includes Hanna-Barbera characters from the syndicated programs "Flintstones," "Jetsons," and "Scooby Doo." From left: Jay Foreman, Janet Lipkin, Frank "The Crank" (not yet a licensed item), Midge Lipkin, and Scooby Doo himself.



Gordon (l) and Jeff Smart proudly show off their *Clean Sweep Classic Jumbo* crane.

Betson staffers with an impressive lineup that includes the *Big Choice Limited Edition* crane and *Flash Four* redemption game. From left: Robert Geschine, John Margold, Bill Seibert, and Neal Rosenberg.

Marsha Lucas of Dorney Park salutes Bill Bobowicz of Amusement Services Corp., makers of *Tank Tag* and *Boat Tag*.

Virginia Kauffman of Exidy and a customer by the new *Twister* ball bowling game that's well-suited to redemption arcades.

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Art Warner (r) of Coin Concepts makes a "slam dunk" with the new mini basketball game, *Junior All American*. Wylie Irwin stands by to get the *Rebound*.

Bill,

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2. Did you want to put another machine into Zak's Pizza?
3. Should we sell one of our Main Events?
4. Do you want me to pull everything from Video Theatre this week?
5. Does Hilda have my collection reports ready for tomorrow?

Charles

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Here are the details. MS/DOS compatible for popular systems like IBM, Compaq, Tandy, etc. based on 8086, 80286, or 80386 microprocessors. Operating System: MS/DOS (or PC/DOS) 2.0 or higher. Language: Compiled QuickBasic by Microsoft. Memory Requirement: Minimum 256k with two disks or harddisk. Printer Requirements: 132 characters per line capacity in standard or compressed print, continuous paper feed recommended. Equipment Capacity: Limited only by disk storage space. Practical limits are 50 to 5000 pieces of equipment. Disk Format: All orders include both 3-1/2" and 5-1/4" disk formats.

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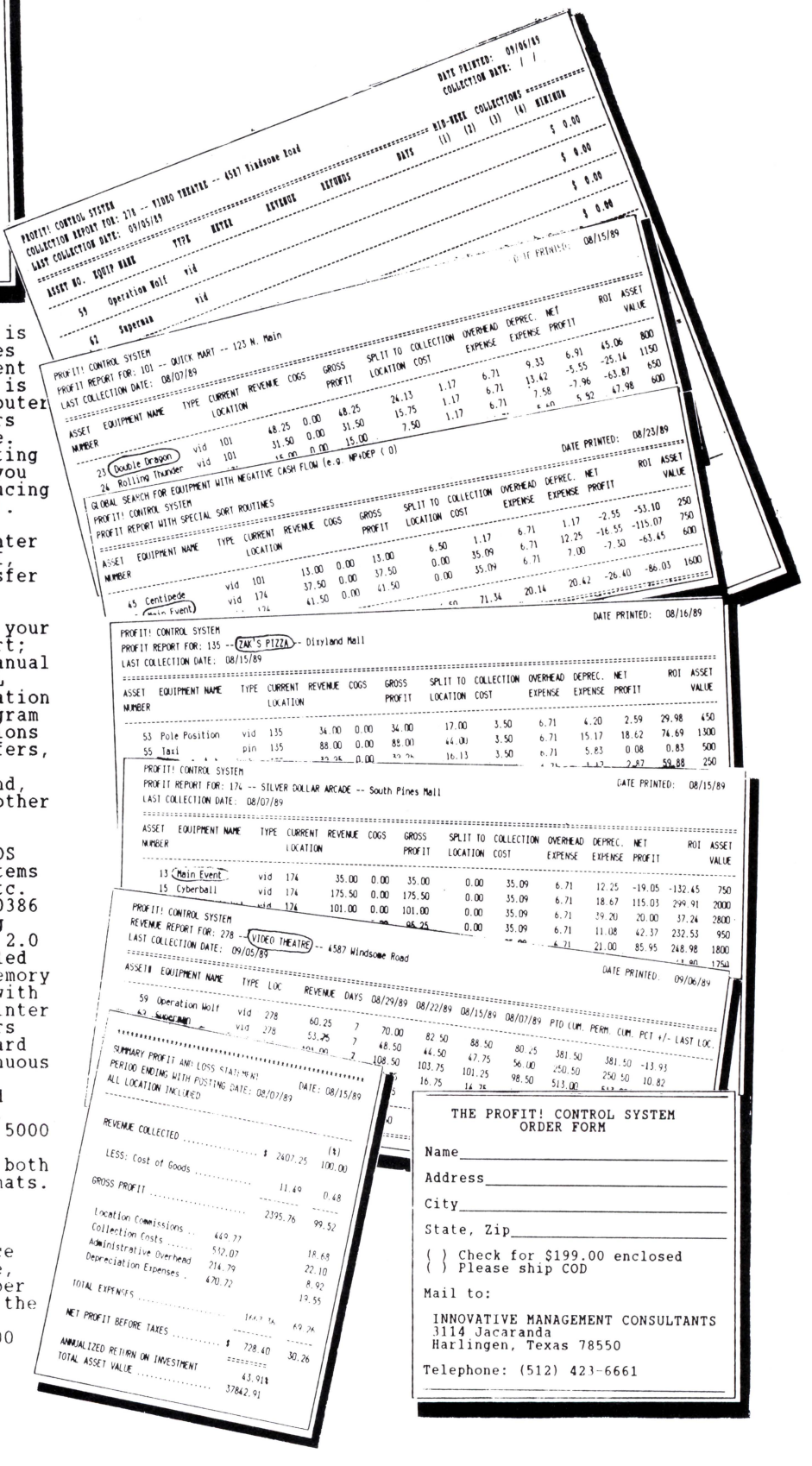
PROFIT! CONTROL SYSTEM
COLLECTION REPORT FOR: 278 -- VIDEO THEATRE -- 4587 Windsome Road
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DATE PRINTED: 09/06/89
COLLECTION DATE: / /
ASSET NO. EQUIP NAME TYPE RATES REVENUE REFUNDS DAYS BIG-WEEK COLLECTIONS (1) (2) (3) (4) REMINDER
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62 Superman vid $ 0.00
$ 0.00
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ASSET NUMBER EQUIPMENT NAME TYPE CURRENT LOCATION REVENUE COGS GROSS PROFIT SPLIT TO LOCATION COLLECTION COST OVERHEAD EXPENSE DEPREC. EXPENSE NET PROFIT ROI ASSET VALUE
23 Double Dragon vid 101 48.25 0.00 48.25 24.13 1.17 6.71 9.33 6.91 45.06 800
24 Rolling Thunder vid 101 31.50 0.00 31.50 15.75 1.17 6.71 13.42 -5.55 -25.14 1150
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45 Centipede vid 101 13.00 0.00 13.00 6.50 1.17 6.71 1.17 -2.55 -53.10 250
Main Event vid 174 37.50 0.00 37.50 0.00 35.09 6.71 12.25 -16.55 -115.07 750
41.50 0.00 41.50 0.00 35.09 6.71 7.00 -7.50 -63.45 600
71.34 20.14 20.42 -26.40 -86.03 1600
PROFIT! CONTROL SYSTEM
PROFIT REPORT FOR: 135 -- ZAK'S PIZZA -- Dixyland Mall
LAST COLLECTION DATE: 08/15/89
DATE PRINTED: 08/16/89
ASSET NUMBER EQUIPMENT NAME TYPE CURRENT LOCATION REVENUE COGS GROSS PROFIT SPLIT TO LOCATION COLLECTION COST OVERHEAD EXPENSE DEPREC. EXPENSE NET PROFIT ROI ASSET VALUE
53 Pole Position vid 135 34.00 0.00 34.00 17.00 3.50 6.71 4.20 2.59 29.98 450
55 Taxi pin 135 88.00 0.00 88.00 44.00 3.50 6.71 15.17 18.62 74.69 1300
16.13 3.50 6.71 5.83 0.08 0.83 500
2.87 59.88 250
PROFIT! CONTROL SYSTEM
PROFIT REPORT FOR: 174 -- SILVER DOLLAR ARCADE -- South Pines Mall
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DATE PRINTED: 08/15/89
ASSET NUMBER EQUIPMENT NAME TYPE CURRENT LOCATION REVENUE COGS GROSS PROFIT SPLIT TO LOCATION COLLECTION COST OVERHEAD EXPENSE DEPREC. EXPENSE NET PROFIT ROI ASSET VALUE
13 Main Event vid 174 35.00 0.00 35.00 0.00 35.09 6.71 12.25 -19.05 -132.45 750
15 Cyberball vid 174 175.50 0.00 175.50 0.00 35.09 6.71 18.67 115.03 299.91 2000
101.00 0.00 101.00 0.00 35.09 6.71 39.20 20.00 37.24 2800
95.25 0.00 35.09 6.71 11.08 42.37 232.53 950
6.71 21.00 85.95 248.98 1800
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DATE PRINTED: 09/06/89
ASSET# EQUIPMENT NAME TYPE LOC REVENUE DAYS 08/29/89 08/22/89 08/15/89 08/07/89 PTD CUM. PERM. CUM. PCT +/- LAST LOC.
59 Operation Wolf vid 278 60.25 7 70.00 82.50 88.50 80.25 381.50 381.50 -13.93
62 Superman vid 278 53.25 7 48.50 44.50 47.75 56.00 250.50 250.50 10.82
108.50 103.75 101.25 98.50 513.00
16.75
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PERIOD ENDING WITH POSTING DATE: 08/07/89 DATE: 08/15/89
ALL LOCATION INCLUDED
REVENUE COLLECTED $ 2407.25 (%) 100.00
LESS: Cost of Goods 11.49 0.48
GROSS PROFIT 2395.76 99.52
Location Commissions 449.77 18.68
Collection Costs 512.07 22.10
Administrative Overhead 214.79 8.92
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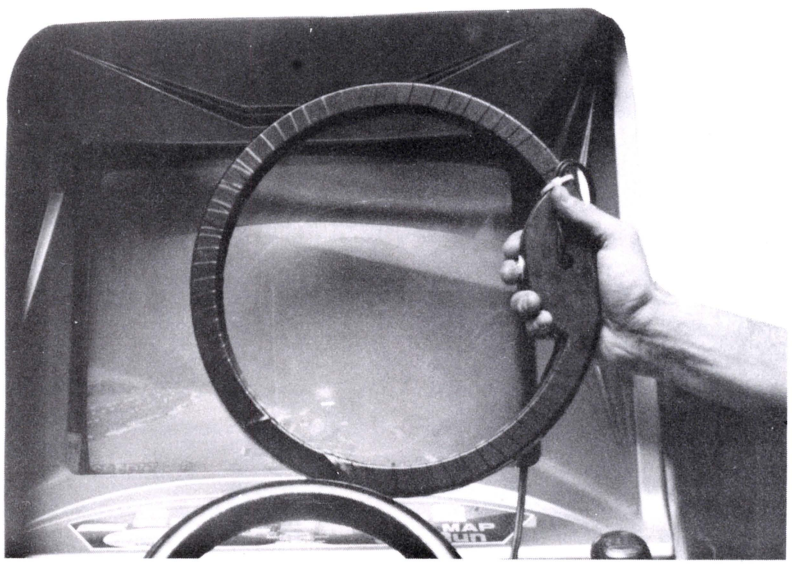
Randy Fromm

Color monitors and degaussing

I had a really strange monitor problem the other day. Even though you might never actually see this problem yourself, it was so interesting that I thought I'd bring it to your attention and carry on with a little discussion of picture tubes and degaussing coils.

Here is the symptom of the problem: When you turn the game on in the morning, the colors are all scrambled on the screen. The picture is made of blotches of red, green and blue. Using a manual degaussing coil brings the picture back to normal, leading to the logical (and correct) conclusion that the degaussing circuit in the monitor must not be operating properly.

But here are the twists that make this particular failure so interesting: The colored blobs that appear each morning on the screen are much worse than can be accounted for by the magnetic field of the Earth or by any local source of magnetic disturbance. To top that off, all of the components in the degaussing circuit test 100 percent normal!



Manual degaussing of the CRT clears the picture tube.

Magnetism and picture tubes don't mix

While you're pondering the solution to the monitor problem, let's take a look at the picture tube and see how just a little magnetism can really mess up the picture in a color monitor.

Take a close look at the screen on the front of a color picture tube. There are thin vertical stripes of "phosphor" coating the inside of the glass. There are actually three different types of phosphor laid down in alternating stripes. Each one glows with a different color when struck by a stream of high-energy electrons. These energetic electron "rays" come from three "electron guns" that live in the skinny neck of the picture tube (also known as the cathode ray tube or CRT).

When properly aligned, the electrons from each of the three electron guns will strike only a single color phosphor. Electrons from the so-called red gun will strike only the red colored phosphor, the green gun hits green phosphor, and blue phosphor gets zapped by the blue gun. This alignment process is known as the "purity and convergence procedure." Six slightly magnetic rings, centered over the electron gun assembly in the neck of the CRT, are used to bend the streams of electrons so that each strikes the correct color phosphor.

If the picture tube becomes magnetized in any way, the streams of electrons may hit the wrong color phosphor. It doesn't take much of a magnetic field to cause a noticeable change in color. Just the magnetic field of the Earth is more than enough to do it. This is especially apparent in a monitor that is mounted face-up, such as in a cocktail table or rifle video. Turn the game on and then turn it around. As you rotate the game, you will probably see the colors shift as the picture tube intercepts the magnetic field of the Earth.

To prevent the Earth (or anything else) from permanently magnetizing the CRT, all color monitors use a degaussing coil. The degaussing coil is really a demagnetizing coil (the gauss is a unit of magnetic strength) that surrounds the outside of the picture tube. The degaussing coil is powered by 120 volts AC. The strong magnetic field created by the coil is an alternating field that changes polarity 120 times each second. The rapidly changing field quickly demagnetizes the CRT by scrambling any molecules that might be aligned through magnetic attraction.

But the degaussing coil can't be allowed to remain energized while the monitor is in normal operation. Beside the fact that it will burn-up if left continuously powered, the magnetic field produced by the coil will distort the picture and the colors. Most monitors use an automatic degaussing circuit to control the coil. The degaussing coil is activated only when the monitor is first turned on, and then only briefly (for just a fraction of a second) at that. In order to re-activate the coil, the monitor must be allowed to cool for 10 to 20 minutes.

Let's take a look at a typical circuit and

see how it works. The key to this circuit is a component called a thermistor, a component that changes its resistance with a change in temperature. In a degaussing circuit, the thermistor will increase in resistance as its temperature rises. This type of thermistor is also known as a posistor. As the temperature of the thermistor drops, so does its resistance.

The basic degaussing circuit is simple. It contains just two components: the thermistor and the coil itself. They are connected in series and to the 120 volts AC input of the monitor. When power is applied to the monitor, the degaussing circuit is powered as well. At this time, the thermistor is cold and has a low resistance. The alternating current flows through the thermistor and the degaussing coil, creating the AC magnetic field and demagnetizing the CRT.

But as soon as current begins to flow through the thermistor, it begins to heat. As it heats, its resistance increases rapidly until just a tiny trickle of current is allowed to pass; it's not enough to cause a noticeable effect on the screen but just enough to keep the thermistor nice and warm. This prevents the degaussing coil from activating again until the monitor is turned off for a while and the thermistor has had a chance to cool.

A slightly more sophisticated version of the automatic degaussing coil circuit uses a 15 ohm resistor and a pair of diodes in addition to the thermistor and the coil itself. The addition of the resistor assures that the thermistor will heat rapidly (whether or not the degaussing coil is plugged in, by the way) and cut off the current to the coil.

The diodes are used to choke off any residual flow of AC to the coil when the thermistor is at its maximum resistance. Notice the unusual connection of these two diodes. They are connected in parallel, with the anode of one diode connected to the cathode of the other and vice-versa.

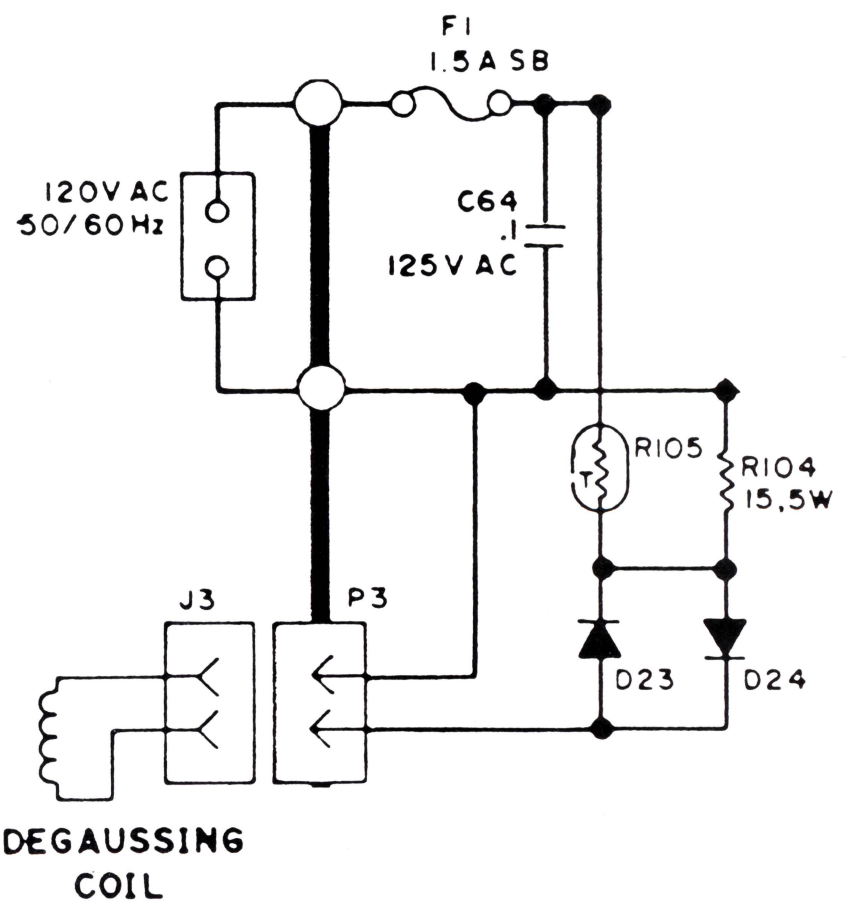
This arrangement allows AC to pass through the diodes and to the degaussing coil when the thermistor is cold. When the heated thermistor cuts off most of the current, the small amount of residual current that's left is cut off from the coil by the voltage drop of the diodes. This assures that there will be absolutely no interference from the degaussing coil; it is completely shut down.

Have you figured out the cause of my monitor problem yet? The last two paragraphs should provide a big clue. Go back and re-read the symptoms if you can't remember them and try to figure out what might be causing them. When you're ready for the answer, read on.

For the picture to have such huge blotches of color, something with a powerful DC field must have magnetized the picture tube. This is verified by the fact that the picture is cleared up by manually degaussing the CRT. Unlike an AC field which demagnetizes, a stationary magnetic field, like a permanent magnet or DC electromagnet, will have just the opposite effect.

If either of the diodes in the degaussing circuit open or become disconnected, the coil will become powered by DC instead of AC. That's what happened in this case. The solder joint on one of the diodes had fractured, creating a *gaussing coil* where my degaussing coil used to be. All of the components tested good because they are good! Only the connection was bad.

This is where knowing a little about the circuit really helped to fix it. When I tested the diodes, I should have seen a junction drop or low resistance in both directions owing to the unusual connection of the two diodes. Instead, both diodes tested 100 percent normal (remember?). They couldn't have been connected to each other! All I had to do was resolder the diode to correct the problem. □



Typical degaussing circuit.

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Program #1 Basic Electronics — Approximately 30 minutes — $29.95
An introduction to basic electronics as it relates to electronic games. No heavy math or theory . . . Just a commonsense look at electronics and electronic terminology.

Program #2 Semiconductors — Approximately 30 minutes — $29.95
Semiconductors are electronic components like diodes and transistors. Many of the failures we encounter in electronic games can be traced to a semiconductor failure. This program covers the semiconductor components that are found in videogames and pinball machines. Topics include identification, testing and obtaining replacement components. This lesson is a **MUST** for the novice technician.

Program #3 Power Supplies Parts 1 & 2 — Approximately 60 minutes — $49.95
Power supplies are easy to understand and to repair. This two part lesson covers both power supplies and voltage regulator circuits in great detail. This program is a recommended prerequesite for those wishing to learn to repair videogame monitors as many monitor problems can be traced to failures in the monitor's power supply.

Program #4 Raster Scan Monitors — Approximately 60 minutes — $49.95
The popularity of conversion kits in today's operations means that videogame monitors must be kept operating longer than ever before. This lesson details the operation of monitors and outlines many of the common problems you can expect to encounter. Monitor safety is also covered in this lesson.

Program #5 The Digital Multimeter — Approximately 30 minutes — $29.95
The DMM is the single most important piece of test equipment you can use on your route. This lesson shows you how to use the DMM to make all of the tests and measurements necessary for repairing games. I believe this is the single most important program in the videotape training series.

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Tim Wolfe

Players: "We'll pay it!"

This year Pinball Expo '89 celebrated its fifth anniversary as the foremost collector-oriented pinball machine trade show. Many of the U.S. game collectors love this show in Chicago, as it presents an opportunity to get together with other pinball enthusiasts who have also been "bitten by the amusement game bug."

The manufacturers bring the newest equipment and get some insight from the real hardcore players as to how the games are playing on a national level. The show is not like AMOA, though. There is no real push to sell product. Instead, it is an opportunity for the manufacturer to listen to what the players are looking for, and to find out what kind of pin games are exciting to the players. It's also a time for the players to question the manufacturers as to why things are being done the way that they are.

This year's expo will go down in history as the one where players learned that it's now going to cost more to play. As a player, I am cheering. I don't mind playing at 50 cents because I feel that the games are exciting enough to warrant the higher cost to play. Operators must get faster return on investment on flipper games to keep the game in existence.

There was a session that included a panel of magazine editors. A point that was brought out is very dear to a pinball player's heart—clean games. I said the games were exciting enough to warrant 50-cent play, but the games must be kept in first-rate condition at all times.

I don't have to tell anyone that there is much more maintenance on a pin game for a receding return. Operators will argue that a video games just needs to be wiped down while a pinball may need much more work. But as a player, I say that's your job if you are going to operate pinball machines. It's your obligation to the player to keep the games clean. If you do that, we won't mind paying more.

Increasing the cost of play is most difficult on the initial set-up of a piece. Will the player play at 50 cents? I say yes. But you have to stick to your guns on this one. Don't let location owners wear you down on reducing the price from 50 cents to a quarter. Operators cannot let location owners dictate game pricing. Fifty-cent play is necessary—case closed.

"Operators, don't let location owners wear you down on reducing the price from 50 cents to a quarter."

As a suggestion to operators, I say change all games on your routes to 50-cent play. Obviously, this is not feasible with some of the older equipment. However, the faster game pricing goes to 50-cent play, the faster new equipment is going to pay itself off. Pinball is such a refreshing change to video glut. But the pricing and earnings tell operators to buy video. The difference is this: how will a 1985 video compete against a 1985 pinball like *High Speed?* Obviously *High Speed* is still a good earning piece. I would put it up against any video game from the same year.

Let's talk about longevity and earnings for pinball, not video. Pin games last longer; we all know that. You can close the earnings gap with more aggressive pricing on all of your pinballs on route. This may not be as true for arcade play, but nevertheless, I still agree with the manufacturers on the aggressive pricing advice. The games will earn more money.

Attention operators! Do not change the manufacturers' factory-setting pricing policy. You will be short-changing yourselves on the earning potential of a pinball machine in 1990.

Tim Wolfe is an avid pinball enthusiast. He owns about 20 games and prides himself on being a good player. I met him at the Pinball Expo in Chicago and was impressed with his dedication to game play and his expression of ideas. He has worked for an operator and is therefore familiar with the coin-op industry.

Tim lives in Newburgh, N.Y., and is a graduate of Clarkson University. He is currently working as a sales representative in the family heating/cooling business. Tim has agreed to write a column from a game player's perspective. He will cover a variety of subjects, even why he likes or dislikes certain games. If anyone has any questions for Tim, send them to me and I will forward them on. I hope you'll enjoy reading these commentaries from a player's point of view . . . Valerie □

TELL 'EM YOU READ IT IN THE 'METER

Coin of the realm adds sparkle in winter

Jewelry is a wise choice for crane and rotary stock and as redemption prizes almost any time of year. Especially in the winter, the glitter of well-crafted jewelry will draw player interest.

HMS Monaco has designed an entire line of jewelry based on the inspiration to recast favorite American coins of the recent past and transfer them to pendants and keychains.

Many of us can remember the famous mercury dimes and buffalo head nickels. These, along with Indian head nickels, $20 gold pieces, and other coinage from days gone by have been enlarged to suit the new designs. Pendants hang from chains 22 inches long.

If you have been looking for something different and unusual, this coin replica jewelry could be just what you need. Jewelry has that all-important high "value perception" that keeps players satisfied and keeps them coming back to play for more prizes. When players feel they receive a truly fair return for their entertainment dollar, it's good for the entire industry.

For more information on coin replica jewelry, call HMS Monaco at (800) 777-0901 or (212) 691-9000.

All merchandise suppliers are invited to submit details on their latest prizes for this column. Just send in the item itself or a photo and we will be happy to include it in an upcoming issue. □

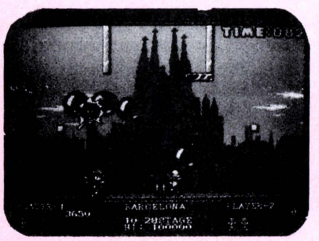
Jumbo

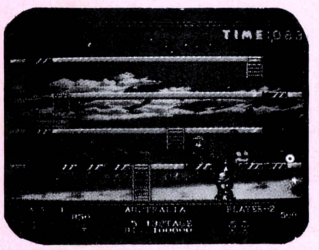
Betson Enterprises now offers the *Jumbo* prize- vending unit that is sure to delight youngsters.

A new addition to Betson's line of redemption and novelty products, *Jumbo* is bright pink with a large elephant figure inside. Children actually control the movement of the elephant's trunk with a joystick on the front panel of the machine. The trunk picks up the prize and drops it in the prize chute.

Pricing on *Jumbo* is operator-adjustable. *Jumbo* provides a new dimension in bulk vending and may be the first machine of this kind to generate 50 cents per vend.

For more information, write Betson Enterprises, 6 Empire Blvd., Moonachie, NJ 07074; (800) 524-2343 outside of New Jersey, (800) 652-2837 in New Jersey, or (201) 440-2200; FAX 201-440-4463.





Buster Bros.

Capcom debuts *Buster Bros.*, a new video that takes players on travels from Mount Fugi to Australia, Russia, India, and throughout Europe on a world-class adventure.

The game starts at the base of famous Mount Fugi. As giant balls fall from the sky, our adventurers must aim and shoot. The balls pop, then split into smaller, faster moving balls to produce more targets and more chances to gain points.

If any of the falling balls touch the player's on-screen character, he is dead. The balls also drop weapons on the characters, who must pick up a gun and fire. Twin darts come into the picture as well as a force field that protects the characters from annihilation.

The game is two-player interactive and offers 50 different levels. Teamwork helps these hunters in their journey across the globe. The cities and countryside of each locale come alive with the high-resolution graphics.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Capcom USA, 3303 Scott Blvd., Santa Clara, CA 95054; (408) 727-0400.

Jr. Sega Kit

Sega makes it easy to convert many existing Sega games to *ESWAT*, the popular kit that features a rookie on the Liberty City Police Force. The answer is the new *ESWAT Jr. Sega Kit* that comes with a ROM board, security device, full cabinet graphics, and an operator's manual.

The kit allows a quick and inexpensive conversion of other games such as *Shinobi, Altered Beast, Wrestle War, Alien Syndrome (some), and Golden Axe*.

Other games that lend themselves to this conversion are *Sonic Boom, Dynamite Dux, Dunk Shot* and any Sega 16B-based games. The kit affords an opportunity to capitalize on the popularity of *ESWAT* at a reasonable investment.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Sega Enterprises Inc.

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This means you can now convert many of your existing SEGA games to ESWAT. Sega's nonstop action law enforcement game, at a substantial savings. The ESWAT JR. KIT includes a ROM board, security device, full cabinet graphics, and an operator's manual. The kit allows you to quickly and inexpensively convert your existing SHINOBI™, ALTERED BEAST™, WRESTLE WAR™, ALIEN SYNDROME™ (some), and GOLDEN AXE™ games. The ESWAT JR. KIT can also be installed in SONIC BOOM™, DYNAMITE DUX™, DUNK SHOT™, and other SEGA 16B–based games.
For more information on either the ESWAT JR. KIT or the regular ESWAT kit call your authorized SEGA distributor.
Sega Enterprises, Inc. (USA), 2149 Paragon Drive, P.O. Box 610550, San Jose, CA 95161-0550.
(408) 435-0201
Inexpensively converts: SHINOBI ALTERED BEAST WRESTLE WAR ALIEN SYNDROME GOLDEN AXE and others.
SEGA

USA, 2149 Paragon Drive, San Jose, CA 95161; (408) 435-0201; FAX 408-435-0294.

Astayanax

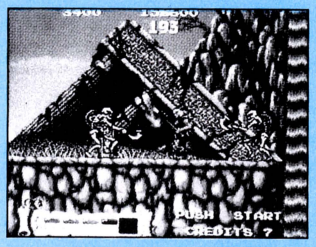
Jaleco introduces a kit that takes players on an adventure with ancient Greek warriors in *Astayanax*, a one- or two-player game featuring simultaneous buy-in.

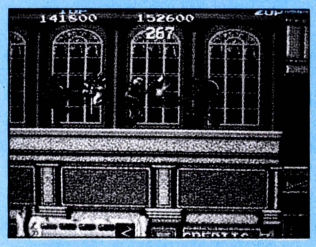
Players travel through aged cities and caverns, palaces and ruins, to battle gargoyles, armed skeletons, two-headed dragons, winged warriors, and monsters too vile to describe.

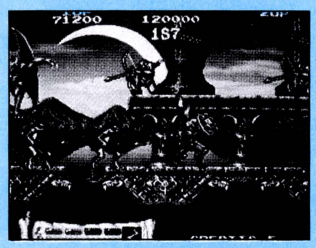
The game takes players on a long and dangerous road in search of the king's kidnapped daughter. The hero, Astayanax, and his friend Roche battle their enemies with the aid of the trusty ax, Bash. Astayanax is a name from Greek mythology.

Astayanax comes complete with circuit board, JAMMA-compatible wiring harness, marquee, four-color cabinet graphics, joysticks, and buttons.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Jaleco USA Inc., 5617 W. Howard St., Niles, IL 60648; (708) 647-7077; FAX 312-647-7087.







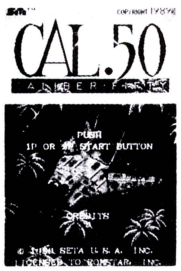
Cal.50

Jungle warfare action comes to the video screen with Romstar's newest kit, *Cal.50* (Caliber Fifty), a one- or two-player game for vertical monitors.

In *Cal.50*, two jet pilots crash land on a military mission in Vietnam during the mid-'60s. Mercenaries engaged in a rescue attempt are killed in a bloody battle, leaving the pilots to fend for themselves. Managing to gather enough weapons for protection, they disappear into the thick underbrush of the jungle, hotly pursued by the enemy.

Six scenes await the players, who use 16-way rotary joysticks to fight off the enemy until they meet up with another rescue unit.

The anxiety level runs high as the pilots use their wits and stretch their firepower to the limit.



Cal. 50 comes complete with JAMMA-compatible wiring harness, PC board, decals, control panel overlay, and all parts required in a Romstar-standard kit.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Romstar Inc., 22857 Lockness Ave., Torrance, CA 90501; (213) 539-2744; FAX (213) 539-3626.

Wishing Well

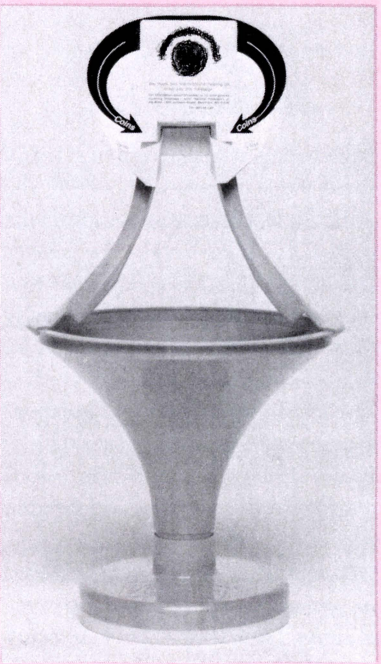
Vending Investments offers several models of its *Wishing Well* charity-motivated specialty item that easily fits into most locations.

The *Wishing Well* is a cone-shaped unit that accepts all standard coinage. Patrons place their coins on the outside rim of the unit and watch them spiral inward to a central drop. Labeling indicates which charity will benefit from a portion of the proceeds from this simple activity.

Wishing Well is virtually maintenance-free, as there are no moving parts to break.

There are two floor models from which to choose, two feet high or three feet high, and one countertop model 18 inches tall.

For more information, write Vending Investments, 6822 22nd Ave. No., Suite 400, St. Petersburg, FL 33710; (800) 780-4411.



People Postcards

Alter Enterprises introduces a fully-automated vending machine that creates site-specific picture postcards in color featuring customers in their choice of backgrounds. Called *People Postcards*, the unit produces the unique postcard in 1.5 minutes.

People Postcards occupies about 16 square feet of floor space, the same size as traditional photo booths. It is fully automated and requires no attendant.

Customers deposit the correct amount, push a button to select the desired postcard background, then see their image with the background. After a warning countdown, allowing time to pose, the picture begins to print; the system then automatically resets itself.

Unlike a photographic process, *People Postcards* uses a new thermal process that eliminates the need for messy chemical solutions or light-sensitive paper. The two-part print set—color ribbon cartridge and electronic print paper—makes 100 continuous-tone color prints before replenishment is needed.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Alter Enterprises, Westpark Business Center, 210 West Parkway, Pompton Plains, NJ 07444; (201) 616-1111; FAX 201-616-1415.

Personal Valet, Lady's Maid

Omni-Vend is marketing two vending units that dispense personal hygiene and convenience items with *Personal Valet* and *Lady's Maid*.

Both units are suitable for placement in hotels, motels, and restaurants where necessary items such as mouthwash, headache relievers, toothbrushes, and disposable razors are needed. The vend price is operator-adjustable, from 50 cents to 75 cents per item.

Omni Vend adds something extra with a program to benefit Special Olympics. A wall plaque has been designed for the location owner to place in his establishment indicating that a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the products will be donated to Special Olympics.

For more information on the vending units and the program, write Omni-Vend, 435 Newbury St., Danvers, MA 01923; (800) 966-VEND or (508) 777-1545.

Lights... Camera... Action!

Premier Technology debuts a new Gottlieb pinball game that takes players on the set of a blockbuster movie where the player becomes a stuntman who must win a gunfight, complete the stunt scene, collect the jackpot, and shoot the red target during the countdown bonus.

The game has a unique feature: by winning a card hand, the player may select which scene the game will enter! The colorful backglass shows a movie in the process of being filmed, with the famous Golden Gate Bridge and the city of San Francisco in the background.

Action starts first with a plunger shot that may lead to a gunfight, where the player's action is animated in the lightbox. During multi-ball, the rotating playfield can be set up for a million loop shot. Different scenes are highlighted by flood lights on the playfield.

The game also offers ball jets, catch-up, and an automatic skill level that changes game difficulty by reading the player's skill. New system highlights include switch matrix input protection, lamp short protection, an interlocking connector system, expanded bookkeeping functions, and a lithium battery that retains data for five years.

Lights... Camera... Action! is being shipped at settings of 50 cents for one play, 75 cents for two, and $1 for three.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Premier Technology, 759 Industrial Drive, Bensenville, IL 60106; (708) 350-0400; FAX 708-350-1097.

Classic Jumbo Clean Sweep

Smart Industries introduces the *Classic Jumbo Clean Sweep* crane that features a lower playfield, increased window display, and a "motion" sound system to compliment the game's new look.

Standard equipment includes a $1/$5 bill acceptor with a 400 stacker, a credit/timer LED readout, and a large set of fully-adjustable claws to handle prizes up to 16 inches tall.

Adding to the visual impact of this new model are halogen trac lighting in the display area and rope lights in the side channel of the cabinet.

The *Classic Jumbo Clean Sweep* has the same features as the other *Clean Sweep* models: three skill game options, skill joystick control, microprocessor game boards, and 1.5-inch square steel frame tubing. Among the options are a photo eye prize counter meter, push button controls, and a winner light. The console box has been designed for easy removal and passage through standard doorways.

The *Classic Single* measures 35.5 inches wide, 41 inches deep, and 77.5 inches high. The *Classic Two-Player* is 70 inches wide, 41 inches deep, and 77.5 inches high. Both models are 34 inches deep without the console box.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Smart Industries Corp., Mfg., 1626 Delaware Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50317; (800) 553-2442 or (515) 265-9900; FAX 800-265-3148.

Bad Cats

Williams Electronics' newest game is, in their words, "pinball purr-fection." It's called *Bad Cats*, a pin that breaks new ground with an industry first: a Linear Target to challenge today's players. The harder the Linear Target is hit, the greater the value of the "Fish Bone-Us." The bonus can build up to five million points.

The cats are on the prowl with an easy access center ramp, which can reward an extra ball and increased scoring. Once players spell out B-A-D C-A-T-S, a "Fishbowl Jackpot" of eight million points becomes possible. This is the largest jackpot ever awarded on a pinball machine, and it's sure to be an added bonus for long-term earnings on location.

Other features include a left-side "Tiger Ramp" that progressively increases in value to unlimited million-point scoring, but with a new twist. On the last ball, five consecutive ramp shots give players the single highest scoring value in history: 20 million points! Also, when players enter Ralphie's doghouse, *Bad Cats* kicks into high gear with a spinning "Seafood Table" mystery wheel. It offers such goodies as an extra ball, a special, 100,000 points, or even a chance for an instant jackpot.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Williams Electronics Games Inc., 3401 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (312) 267-2240.

Shadow Dancer

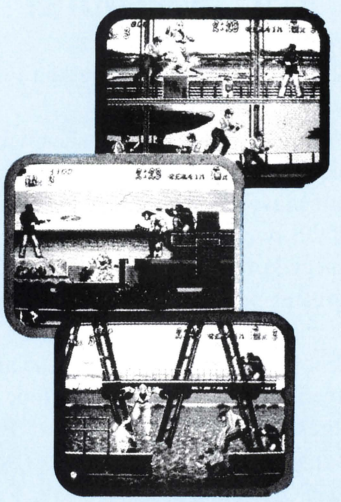
Sega brings a new one- or two-player kit to the video market with *Shadow Dancer*, a game that heralds the return of the powerful young Ninja warrior who made *Shinobi* such a hit.

Our Ninja warrior and his attacking canine partner now match martial arts skills with a brutal band of highly-trained terrorists. The warrior's mission is to neutralize time bombs planted by the terrorists and to destroy the syndicate that controls them.

Non-stop action takes players across an urban landscape that includes airports, bridges, warehouses, sewers, and a space shuttle launching pad. Game play progresses through 15 stages.

Sega's new computer architecture greatly enhances sound effects, graphics simulation, and player control. Players use conventional buttons and joysticks to control the actions of the warrior and his dog.

The kit comes complete with circuit board, JAMMA wiring harness, full



cabinet graphics, twin control sets with motion control joystick, in-cabinet control panel with volume control, service switch, and test switch.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Sega Enterprises Inc. USA, 2149 Paragon Drive, San Jose, CA 95161; (408) 435-0201; FAX 408-435-0294.

Special Criminal Investigation

High-speed action abounds in Taito's newest driving/shooting game, *Special Criminal Investigation*, that takes players on a race against time to free the mayor's kidnapped daughter Jennifer.

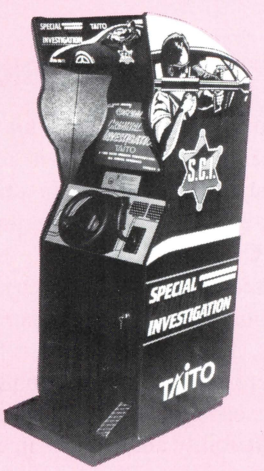
As detectives Tony and Ray of the Bureau of Special Criminal Investigations, the players seek out the dangerous band of thugs responsible for the kidnapping. Speed is of paramount importance since Jennifer is bound to a time bomb!

Players travel through city back streets, country dirt roads, and along the winding curves of a mountainside. Skill is required to avoid hazards such as falling rocks and open bridges encountered while in hot pursuit of the hoodlums.

Controls include a newly-designed and life-tested 360-degree steering wheel, turbo-charged shifter with gun-style grip and trigger, and high-performance accelerator pedal.

With one hand on the wheel and another on a .44 Magnum, the player receives help via a police helicopter that air-drops artillery to give greater fire power.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Taito America Corp., 660 S. Wheeling Road, Wheeling, Il 60090; (312) 520-9280; FAX 312-520-1309.



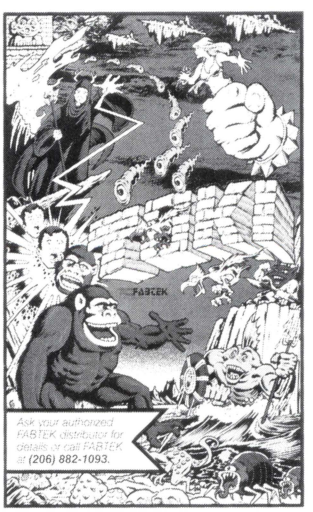
Toki

Fabtek anticipates adding a new video legend to the history books with *Toki*, a game named for a high-jumping, fire- spewing man turned ape. Toki sets out on a perilous adventure to free his kidnapped lover, Miho.

Six challenging stages await Toki as he meets with unworldly characters such as the pouncing fists, the feet of the deadly Bashter, and the eye-popping menace, Rumbacha. Hidden power-items boost Toki's fighting power.

An occasional dose of humor lightens the game play in the form of unusual antics by the likable yet unlikely hero.

Toki is a one-player or alternating two-player action game kit for horizontal monitors. It is licensed from TAD Corp., developers of *Cabal*.



For more information, or distributor referral, write Fabtek Inc., 8333 154th Ave. N.E., Redmond, WA 98052; (206) 882-1093.

Jr. All American, Toss Em, Starburst

Coin Concepts presents three new redemption game entries: *Jr. All American*, a mini basketball game; *Toss Em*, a ball-tossing game sure to please the younger set; and *Starburst*, a new single player coin pusher.

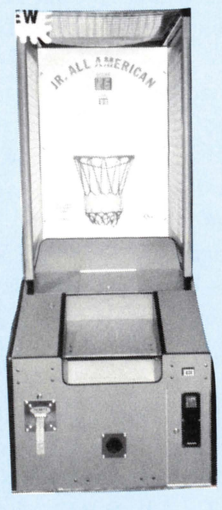
Jr. All American is geared to small children with its lower hoop and smaller size basketballs. It comes with ticket dispenser standard.

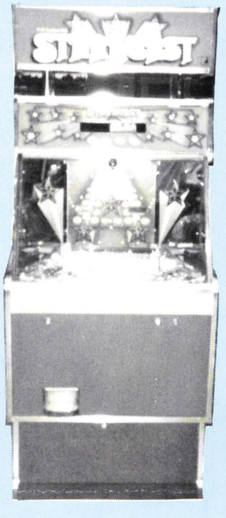
Toss Em is a ball-tossing game without an alley. It allows youngsters a chance to gain tickets after tossing balls into holes with graduated point values.

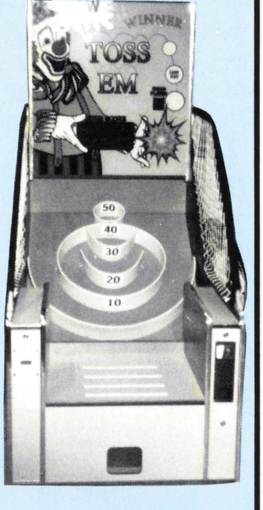
Both *Jr. All American* and *Toss Em* feature operator adjustments that set a maximum win level to prevent game abuse.

Starburst is a single pusher with a unique bonus payout. The playfield and shelf play is typical of most pushers, but this one has the ability to dispense a special promotional bonus token for a greater prize redemption value or a special bonus gift.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Coin Concepts Inc., 12 Edgeboro Road, Unit 4. East Brunswick, NJ 08816; (800) 462-COIN or (201) 390-9009; FAX 201-390-3373.







Sky Adventure

SNK introduces a vertical kit with *Sky Adventure*, a two-player action game that engages players in a battle with the evil forces of the dastardly Colonel Claude.

Eight scenes await the player in his confrontation with Claude's experienced pilots. Players may choose from four different planes at the beginning of the game; each plane has different fire power capability and handles in a different manner.

During the game, the player can use the third button on the control panel to change to a plane with fire power of another caliber.

Each *Sky Adventure* kit comes complete with printed circuit board, wiring harness, graphics, buttons, and joysticks.

For more information, or distributor referral, write SNK Corp. of America, 246 Sobrante Way, Sunnyvale, CA 94086; (408) 736-8844; FAX 408-736-0466.

Exterminator

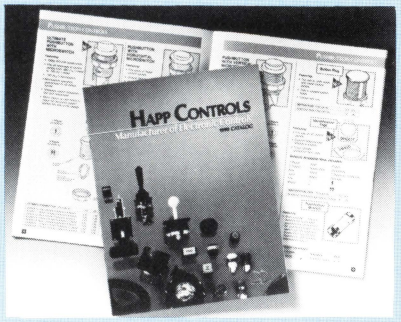
Premier presents a one- or two-player interactive video game, *Exterminator*, based on the theme of ridding a neighborhood of irritating pests.

Players control the exterminator's hand using joysticks and buttons to shoot, squeeze, and squash pests such as flies, spiders, rats, frogs, and mosquitoes.

Seven different houses with five rooms apiece mean a total of 35 scenes of game action for the exterminator. Intruders are confronted on a room-by-room basis. Not only does the player eliminate the pests from the houses, but must also destroy the intruders at their source.

Exterminator offers a continuous buy-in feature and unique cabinet design. The control panel has three buttons and one hand-grip style joystick at each player station. The cabinet is designed to look like a red brick house and includes colorful decals depicting a bug infestation.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Premier Technology, 759 Industrial Drive, Bensenville, IL 60106; (708) 350-0400; FAX 708-350-1097.



Control catalog

Happ Controls has released its 1990 catalog for electronic controls, a 28-page, multi-colored publication. The fully-illustrated catalog features joystick controls, pushbutton controls, trackball controls, driving controls, coin currency controls, and power and specialty controls for industry applications.

Each product line is completely illustrated with schematic diagrams and information to assist in ordering and specifying. Parts are listed, dimensions are detailed, and prices are included. In addition to the many standard products, Happ Controls will customize electronic controls to meet individual applications. Same-day service is offered for most orders; special orders are always welcome.

For a free catalog, contact Happ Controls Inc., 106 Garlisch Drive, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007; (312) 593-6130.

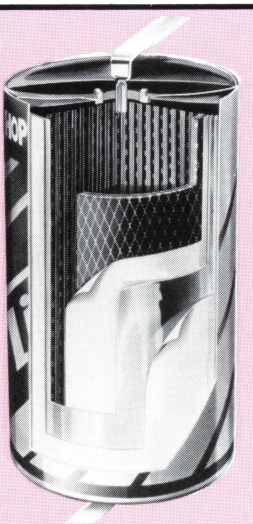
Payment system

Mars Electronics International Inc. introduces the first payment system that integrates the total capabilities of a bill acceptor and coin changer for single-price vending applications. Called the TRC Combo, this integrated payment system provides maximum reliability and lowers the cost of ownership, resulting in maximum profitability.

The TRC Combo combines the capabilities of two Mars Electronics units—a TRC 6800 electronic coin mechanism and a VFM1 bill acceptor—into a single system. Integrating the two functions reduces the number of components. The result is a complete, reliable payment system with a lower initial cost; there are no hidden costs for extra harnesses or interfaces between bill acceptors and coin mechanisms.

A built-in microprocessor diagnostic capability simplifies maintenance troubleshooting. A single power supply reduces the chances of a malfunction and increases safety.

For more information, contact Mars Electronics International, 1301 Wilson Drive, West Chester, PA 19380; (215) 430-2500.



Lithium battery

Hoppecke Battery Systems Inc. has a new product, the LSC, the only high-rate Lithium Manganese Dioxide (Ll MnO2) battery. Unlike other Lithium cells, the LSC exhibits no voltage delay. Its extremely stable voltage—even during high current discharge—allows the user to more fully utilize the cell's capacity and gives much longer performance in most applications.

This primary battery has a non-hazardous, non-toxic design that can be disposed of in normal landfills. The cells will not explode or give off toxic gasses when subjected to high external heat, mechanical abuse, or an internal short (such as penetration by a nail). The LSC has a 10-year shelf life and is completely safe during reverse discharge conditions. It does not require diodes between cells in series.

The cells are available individually in C, D, or Fat D sizes or in packs designed to meet the user's requirements. When shipped in packs, one resettable PTC can be used rather than fuses on the individual cells, reducing the number of components.

For more information, contact Arthur M. Silverman, Hoppecke Battery Systems Inc., 292 Main St., Butler, NJ 07405; (201) 492-2714.

Tool kit

Contact East has a unique set of tools that allow you to check and adjust all types of relays quickly and effectively. The kit includes seven armature and spring adjuster tools; two special offset screwdrivers; two special wrenches; slotted screwholding driver; #0 Phillips screwdriver; 50 gm. tension gauge; 13 blade thickness gauge; insulated inspection mirror; contact burnisher; 4-1/2'' flat nose pliers; instructions; and a vinyl pouch.

For more information on this kit, Model #RTK18, write Contact East, 335 Willow St. So., North Andover, MA 01845; (508) 682-2000.

Adhesive coating

Master Bond Inc. has unveiled its Master Bond AC84, a one-component, conductive adhesive coating specially designed for EMI/RFI shielding applications. It offers superior shielding over a wide frequency range, excellent environmental resistance, and long-term durability at a modest cost.

Master Bond AC84 has unique adhesive qualities and can be applied easily to adhere tenaciously to most surfaces—including plastics—without need of pre-treatment. For optimal adhesion, surfaces should be free from oil, grease, dirt, etc., prior to application.

Application methods include air or airless-type spraying equipment, brushing, dipping, and silkscreening. Uniform, continuous coatings characterized by high electrical conductivity and superior electromagnetic shielding effectiveness are readily formed. They are resistant to weathering, abrasion, humidity, and corrosion.

For more information, contact James Brenner, Master Bond Inc., 154 Hobart St., Hackensack, NJ 07601; (201) 343-8983.

Non-powdered waxes

Wico Distribution Corp. has updated its line of TruSlide products with new formulations and new packaging. All TruSlide products are now manufactured with space-age polymers and contain no powdered wax. This eliminates caking and gummy build-up on playing surfaces and electronic switches.

The TruSlide line consists of Super Speed Wax, High Speed Wax, and Shuffle Alley Wax. A shaker-style plastic container with ''pop-lok'' top and screw-on cap seals out humidity and protects the wax during shipment.

For more information, contact your Wico sales representative or Wico directly at 6400 W. Gross Point Road, Niles, Ill. 60648-4567; (708) 647-7500, (800) 323-0765, or (800) 426-WICO in Illinois. □

Canada

A lawyer in Winnipeg, Manitoba, has challenged a city bylaw that requires children under the age of 16 to have a note from their parents before playing an amusement game. Sid Green, who filed the challenge on behalf of the corporation Music Explosion, says the bylaw discriminates on the basis of age under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"The existence of a free and democratic society does not depend on a bylaw that says you need a note from a parent to play an amusement device," he said. "There's nothing in playing a video game that causes a child to be corrupted. I want the same restrictions that apply to other places where children buy amusements."

Green added that when kids put quarters into coin-op amusement machines, it's the same as buying a video game from a store and hooking it up at home. Why should the bylaw apply to the former yet not the latter, he questioned.

In June 1988, Mothers Record & Games—the store owned by Music Explosion—was charged under the bylaw after a police officer found an underaged youth playing a machine without the parental paper. The charges against this and similar stores have been put on hold, pending the outcome of this challenge.

Georgia

According to the most recent newsletter issued by the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA), various cities and counties in that state are not making life easy for operators.

For example, the city of Hiram has banned all minors from entering any business where pool is played. "The result of this ban was to close down an amusement center which parents in the community favored as a wholesome center for their children," quoted the newsletter. "It is this kind of insensitivity and callousness that makes you wonder if the politicians are listening to their constituency. Or are they too busy protecting some ridiculous high and mighty moral standard?"

An operator in the city of Cummings was recently denied a request to place a pool table in an existing restaurant. "No specific reasons were given," the newsletter pointed out, "but the legal and logical basis seems questionable at best."

And the Douglas County government is requiring a certain number of parking spaces per machine, as well as a separate security guard or supervisor in the area where the machines are located. "In short, these added little expenses result in more and more difficulty in making a living," commented the GAMOA newsletter.

On the bright side, an operator in Adairsville who had a coin pusher seized by local law enforcement received it back intact. He also avoided criminal action. The police attempted to treat the machine as a gambling device *per se*, but further inspection apparently showed that a number of skill features were present. Also, every time a player deposited a quarter, he received a coupon redeemable for merchandise. Hopefully there will be more Georgia operator stories in the future with happy endings like this one.

Florida

The Florida Amusement and Vending Association (FAVA) is gearing up for its 5th Annual Vending Tradeshow, which will be held Feb. 2-4 at the Omni Expo Center in Orlando. Association coordinator Kathey Fanning says the show, themed "Positioned For The '90s," is expected to be the biggest one yet. "It's grown larger and larger every year, so we believe this will be the most successful FAVA show to date," she said.

Fanning stressed that Florida operators should not miss this show, if for no other reason than the information-filled workshops and seminars. "With all that's going on in Florida, an operator almost has to attend the Legislative and Legal Update seminar to keep up with things," Fanning said.

Aside from the exhibits and educational programs, the show schedule includes a golf tournament, spouse activities, a cocktail party, and a banquet with entertainment. For registration or general information, contact Fanning at FAVA headquarters, (904) 878-3134.

Minnesota

Operators of cigarette vending machines are meeting with resistance from assorted cities in Minnesota, including White Bear Lake, which has banned cigarette vending entirely as of Jan. 6. But operators are fighting back, according to Thomas Bryant, legal counsel for the Minnesota Automatic Merchandising Council and the Coalition for Responsible Vending Sales. The latter group is composed of the MAMC, the Minnesota Operators of Music and Amusements (MOMA), and three other state associations.

"The cities of Shoreview and New Brighton have passed 'partial ban' ordinances," Bryant explained. "This means that cigarette vending machines will be left in places with restricted access to minors, but removed from public locations where minors have access."

The CRVS is working on legislation to resolve the problem on a statewide basis, Bryant said. A bill will be introduced when the Legislature convenes during the first week of February. Several cities, including Hastings and Vadnais Heights, are awaiting the outcome of the legislation before taking action, Bryant added. □

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PLAY METER'S classified ads are sold by the column inch ($30 per column inch with a 1 inch minimum). Prepayment must accompany ad. You may pay by check, money order, Visa or Master Card. The deadline is one month before you want the ad to appear (example: August ad must be in by July 1). Send ad orders and payment to: PLAY METER Magazine, P.O. Box 24970, New Orleans, LA 70184; FAX 504-488-7083. For more information, contact Carol Lea LeBell (504) 488-7003.

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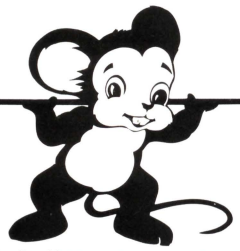

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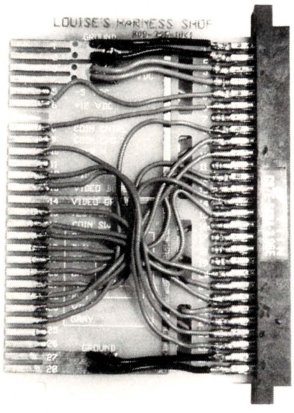

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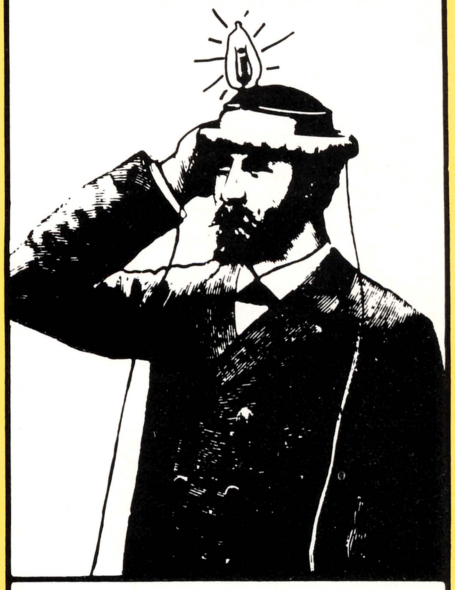

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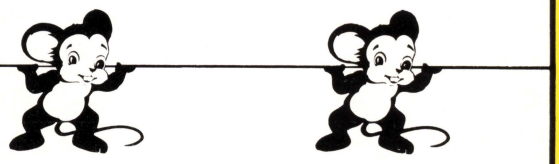

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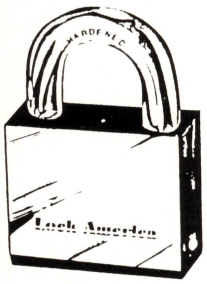

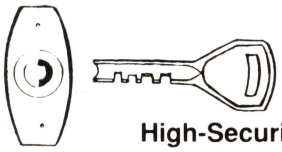

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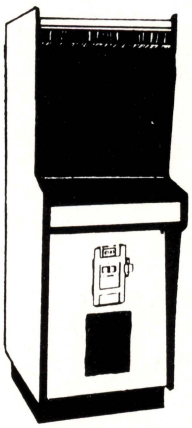

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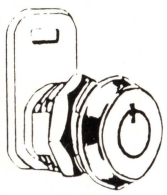

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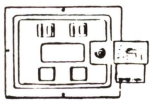

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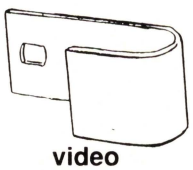
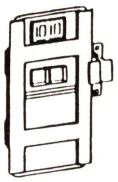


video game bar 697-G07



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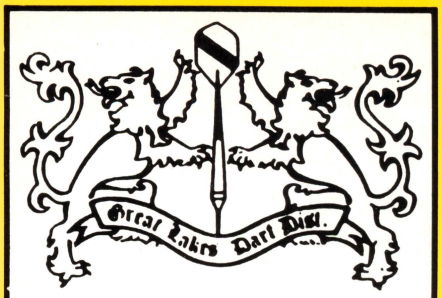

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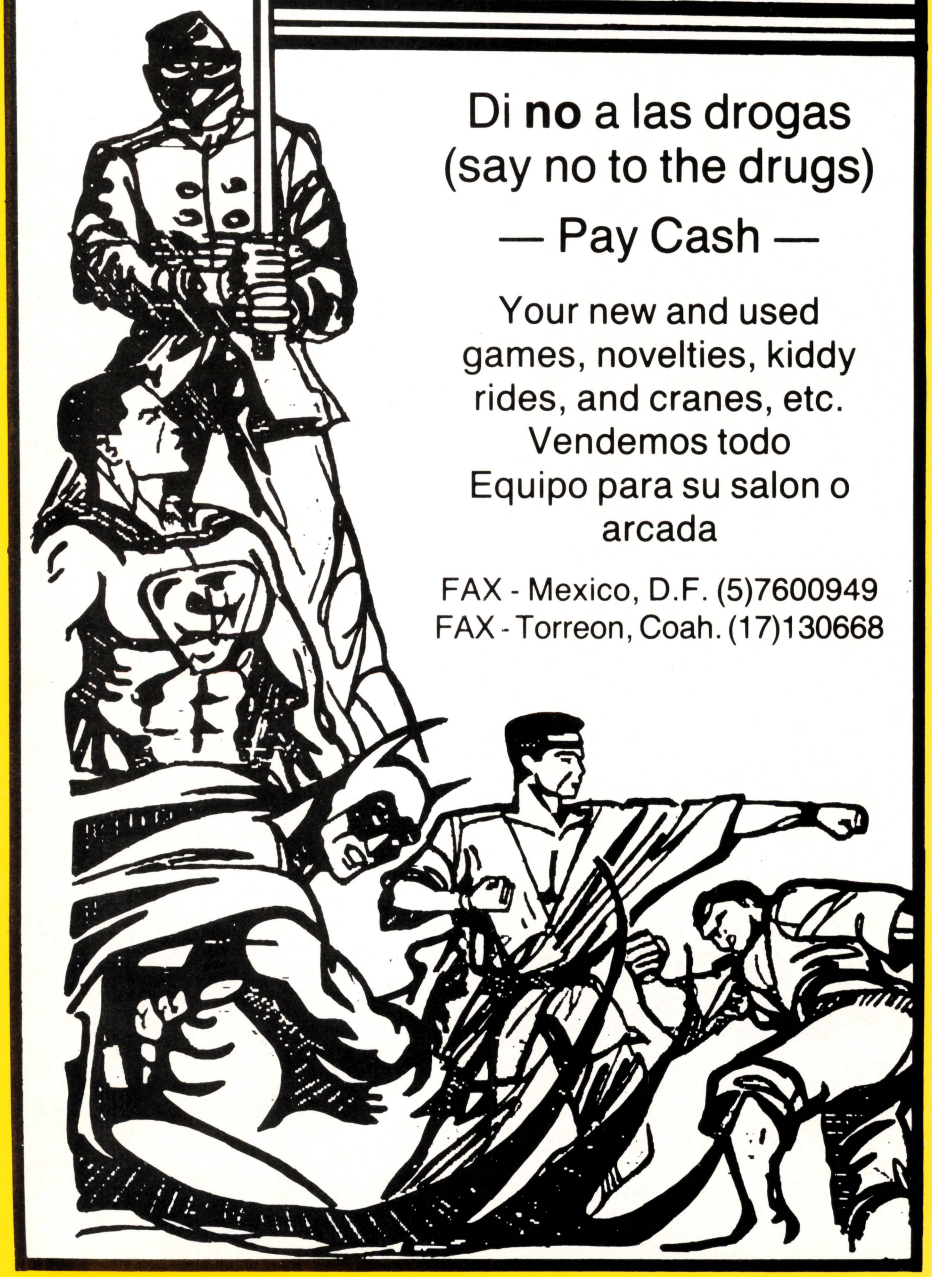

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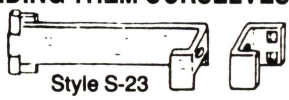

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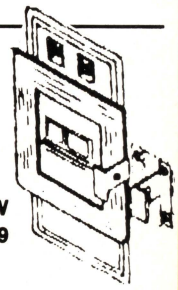

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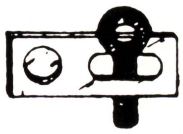

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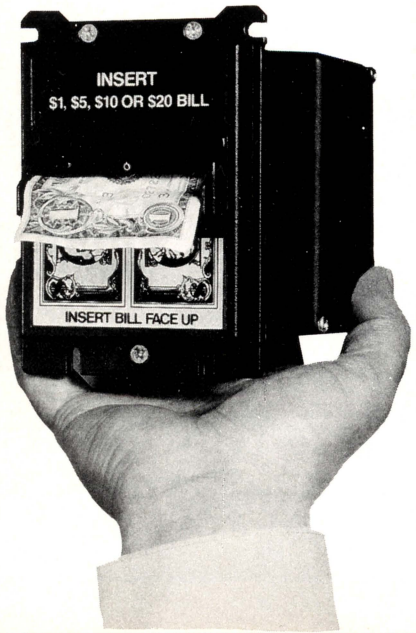

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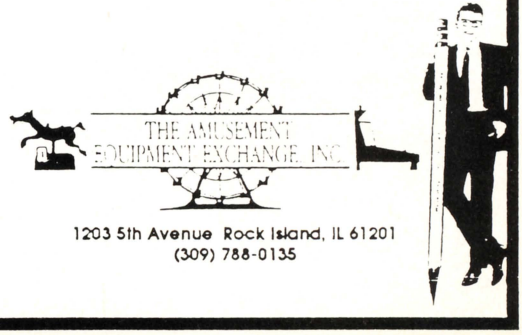

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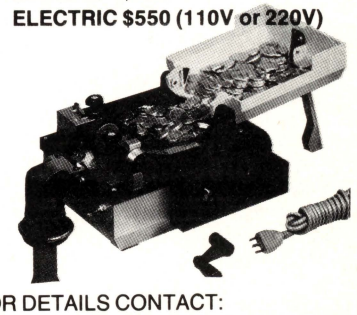

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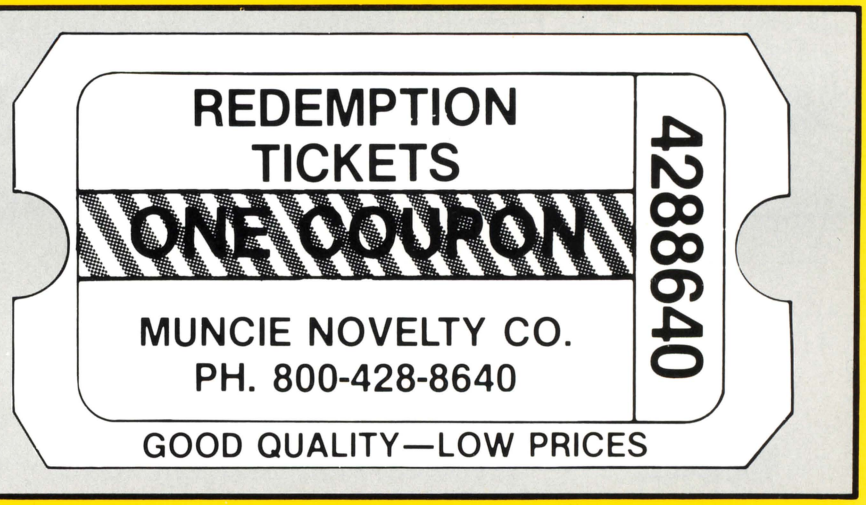

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THE CALENDAR

International

January 23 24 25 26
IMA Show, 11th Annual International Amusement and Vending Machine Trade Fair, Frankfurt Trade Fair Centre, Frankfurt, Germany. Contact Marieluise Ott, Heckmann GMBH, Tel. (06121) 58 04 11.

National

January 20 21
Regional Seminar with Frank "The Crank" and Star*Tech Journal, Brady Distributing Co., Charlotte, N.C. Contact Frank Seninsky (201) 287-4990 or Jim Calore (609) 662-1080.

February 5 6 7
Nightclub, Bar, & Restaurant Expo, Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center, Chicago. Call (800) 247-3881.

February 10 11
Regional Seminar with Frank "The Crank" and Star*Tech Journal, American Vending Sales, Wood Dale, Ill. Contact Frank Seninsky (201) 287-4990 or Jim Calore (609) 662-1080.

February 24 25
Regional Seminar with Frank "The Crank" and Star*Tech Journal, Shaffer Distributing Co., Columbus, Ohio. Contact Frank Seninsky (201) 287-4990 or Jim Calore (609) 662-1080.

March 9 10 11
American Coin Machine Expo (ACME), sponsored by Play Meter and the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA), The Hyatt in Chicago. Contact W.T. Glasgow, Inc. (312) 333-9292.

March 23 24
Valley World Soft-Tip Dart Championships, Omni Hotel, Orlando, Fla. Contact Valley Recreation Products (517) 892-4536.

March 23 24 25
National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) Western Convention and Exhibit of Vending and Foodservice Management, San Jose Convention Center, San Jose, Calif. Contact NAMA (312) 346-0370.

March 30 31
Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA) Trade Show and Convention, Holiday Inn, Roswell, Ga. Contact Stan Miller (404) 424-8105.

April 19 20 21 22
Florida Amusement and Vending Association (FAVA) Annual Convention and Trade Show, Omni Expo Center, Orlando, Fla. Contact FAVA (904) 878-3134.

May 4 6
Northeast Regional Amusement Machine Convention and Trade Show, Trump Regency, Atlantic City. Contact Sue Matterson (518) 439-0981.

May 11 12
Ohio Coin Machine Association (OCMA) Expo '90 Trade Show and Convention. Contact OCMA (614) 221-8600.

June 7 8 9
Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators Association (WAMO) Spring Convention and Trade Show, Holiday Inn, Stevens Point, Wis. Contact WAMO (414) 529-4704.

July 5 6 7 8 9 10
Coors Light World Series of Bar Games grand finale, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Arachnid Inc., (800) 435-8319 or (815) 644-0212.

August 10 11 12
Amusement Music Operators of Tennessee (AMOT) General Membership Meeting and Trade Show, Vanderbilt Plaza, Nashville, Tenn. Contact Jan Green (901) 521-1234.

October 11 12 13 14
National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) National Convention and Exhibit of Vending and Foodservice Management, orange County Convention/Civic Center, Orlando, Fla. Contact NAMA (312) 346-0370.

October 16 17 18
The 32nd Annual Convention and Trade Show of the Amusement and Music Operators of Virginia (AMOV), Cavalier Hotel, Virginia Beach, Va. Contact Charles Rowland (804) 262-9283.

October 25 26 27
Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) Expo '90, New Orleans Convention Center, New Orleans. Contact AMOA (312) 644-6610.

November 9 10
Pinball Expo '90, convention focusing on pinball history and memorabilia, Ramada Hotel O'Hare, Rosemont, Ill. Contact Robert Berk (800) 321-2722.

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THE LAST WORD

Coin-op's version of Pravda?

In this month's "Reader's Response" section, we at Play Meter are taken to task by a Mr. James Orr of Dallas, Texas. He bemoans the lack of educational information found within these pages, calling us "Propaganda Times, sold out to the highest bidder." Ouch, Jimbo, that hurts!

If I were an editor for the Soviet Union's Pravda (or The Village Voice, for that matter), I might have clipped out his letter as an endorsement for a job well-done. Instead, I bristle, for indicting us in this way is akin to charging Billboard magazine with being a record company stooge, or branding The Wall Street Journal an insider trading handbook.

From time to time, readers inform us that our news isn't hard-hitting or "investigative" enough. But one must remember that the parameters for a trade publication are tighter than those for a newspaper or news magazine. This is because the latter two aren't as beholden to the advertiser as we are. Let me illustrate my point.

At my previous place of employment—a daily newspaper—we ran stories that took their subjects to task on numerous occasions. The majority of our advertisers were local merchants, who rarely did anything to warrant a front-page expose. Therefore, we could dig deep into a story, knowing that the "I'll pull my advertising" threat didn't apply. (If the police chief ran an ad at all, it was a classified three-liner wishing everyone a happy Christmas.)

But the trade press has a unique problem: the subjects of a story—be it a news item or feature piece—are often advertisers as well. As one can imagine, it's hard to do a "warts-and-all" vignette on a four-page, full-color sugar daddy. Believe me, a story with 90 percent positives and 10 percent negatives results in a chiding phone call focusing on the latter, with no mention of the former.

The name of the game, then, is balancing the readership tightrope. If we come down too hard on a manufacturer, for whatever reason, the operator subscribers appreciate the candor. That manufacturer, conversely, feels a sense of disloyalty on our part and may go so far as to quit advertising. By the same token, if we fill the magazine up with canned manufacturer press releases ("This game is our best ever, it's earning through the roof," etc.), we make them happy but lose subscribers who see through the smoke screen.

That said, I believe Play Meter does an outstanding job of presenting varied viewpoints. When the manufacturer has news on its latest game, company promotions, employee honors, etc., we gladly pass it along. It may not be considered "news" of the "60 Minutes" variety, but it is pertinent news that should be mentioned.

And when we hear of problems facing operators, they get reported. If such wasn't the case, do you think we'd do a story in this issue on manufacturers and their desire to operate? Both sides were given a chance to tell their side of the story, and in the end, what more can anyone ask from a journalistic medium?

The Kinks, one of the British bands involved in the "British Invasion" of the early '60s, have a song called "Give The People What They Want." We at Play Meter, though, would rather paraphrase Mick Jagger: "You can't always get what you want, but you just might find that you'll get what you need." □

Christopher Caire

Christopher Caire
News Editor

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